



Washington, DC, USA

4–6 November 2022

nmun.org/conferences/washington-dc.html



Economic and Social Council Committee Background Guide 2022

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2022 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This year's staff is Director Lisa Huynh and Assistant Director Theresa McMackin. Lisa holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Political Science with a concentration in International Relations and a Master of Science in Applied Economics. Theresa holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and a Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The topics under discussion for ECOSOC are:

1. Fostering Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth
2. Addressing Economic Inequalities and Global Humanitarian Needs

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 conduct additional research, explore your Member State's policies in-depth, and examine the policies of other Member States to improve your ability to negotiate and reach consensus. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their research to draft and submit a [position paper](#). Guidelines are available in the [NMUN Position Paper Guide](#).

The [NMUN website](#) has many additional resources, including two that are essential both in preparation for the conference and as a resource during the conference. They are:

1. 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. Delegates should not discuss the topics or agenda with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. 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 the committee or the conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretary-General Ana Williamson at usgana.dc@nmun.org or Secretary-General Adam Wolf at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,
Lisa N. Huynh, Director
Theresa McMackin, Assistant Director



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Committee Overview

Introduction

Chapter X of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a founding body and one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).¹ ECOSOC oversees the allocation of approximately 70% of UN resources through its oversight of 12 specialized agencies, and 13 functional and regional commissions.² The Council is mandated to serve as the primary body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics, to advise and coordinate the activities of Member States and other UN entities on matters within this mandate, and to lead discussion on the implementation of the international development framework.³

ECOSOC has undergone several reforms since its inception; notably, during the 1960s and 1970s, developing Member States worked to broaden the agenda of the UN and bring focus to new areas, including the promotion of development and the elimination of poverty.⁴ In 1971, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2847(XXVI) increasing ECOSOC's membership from 27 to 54 Member States through amending Article 61 of the *Charter of the United Nations*.⁵ This amendment allowed ECOSOC to better reflect global economic and geographic diversity.⁶ In 1977, the General Assembly adopted resolution 32/197, "Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System", and sought to improve ECOSOC's effectiveness by increasing coordination with its subsidiary bodies.⁷ To avoid any duplication of work due to broad mandates, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/227 (1995) on "Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields," clarifying that its role is to provide policy guidance while ECOSOC's focus is on coordination of implementation.⁸

Throughout the last decade, the General Assembly implemented additional reforms aimed at strengthening the working methods of ECOSOC.⁹ These reforms included an expansion of ECOSOC's functions to enable it to lead on identifying and discussing emerging challenges, to act as a policy forum for global leaders through the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and provide a platform of accountability for all levels of monitoring and reporting on universal commitments.¹⁰ ECOSOC's commitment to engaging youth in a partnership focused on ensuring the successful attainment of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains a priority.¹¹ This partnership began when the 2010-2011 Year of Youth prompted the first ECOSOC sanctioned Youth Forum in 2012, a meeting that engaged youth and brought to light issues like unemployment for the younger generation.¹² The success of the first sanctioned ECOSOC Youth Forum has now resulted in a more structured and thorough annual forum.¹³ In 2018, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/305, reiterating that ECOSOC's work should be rooted in inclusivity,

¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

³ Ibid.

⁴ New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2021-2022*, 2021.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 138.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Restructuring the Economic and Social Sectors of the United Nations System (A/RES/32/197)*, 1977.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Further Measures for the Restructuring and Revitalization of the United Nations in the Economic, Social and Related Fields (A/RES/50/227)*, 1996.

⁹ New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2021-2022*, 2021; UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)*, 2013.

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

¹¹ UN ECOSOC and UN General Assembly, *UN75 Youth Envoy and ECOSOC Youth Forum Postponement Letter to Member States*, 2020.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

transparency, and flexibility.¹⁴ The 2021 Youth Forum commemorated the Forum's 10th Anniversary.¹⁵ Discussions were guided by the overall theme of the 2021 ECOSOC and HLPF: "Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development."¹⁶

Governance, Structure, and Membership

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 Member States, each of which is elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.¹⁷ The members are elected according to the geographical distribution of UN Member States that are meant to ensure representation from all regions and levels of development.¹⁸ Seats are allocated to each of the following five regional groups of states: 14 to Africa, 11 to Asia and the Pacific; six to Eastern European; 10 to Latin American and Caribbean; and 13 to Western European and Others Group.¹⁹ ECOSOC proceedings are overseen by a President, Vice-President, and Rapporteur, in tandem with a Bureau consisting of the President and four Vice-Presidents.²⁰ These representatives are each elected for a one-year term at the end of each annual session in July.²¹ The Bureau is elected by the full Council annually in July.²² The Bureau sets ECOSOC's agenda, devises action plans, and collaborates with the Secretariat on administrative duties.²³ ECOSOC's presidency rotates yearly among the regional groups.²⁴ The current president is Ambassador Collen Vixen Kelapile of Botswana, who was elected for the 2022 session.²⁵

Each year, ECOSOC meets for one organizational session, which typically takes place anytime between February and July, and one substantive session, which usually occurs in mid-July.²⁶ Organizational sessions are dedicated to administrative aspects, such as agenda setting and elections to the Bureau.²⁷ During substantive sessions, meetings are divided into five segments: the High-Level Segment, the Coordination Segment, the Operational Activities Segment, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, and the Integration Segment, with each focusing on separate thematic aspects of the Council's work.²⁸ The addition of these five segments were mandated by General Assembly resolution 68/1 (2013), *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*.²⁹ Each annual segment allows the plenary body to focus on specific agenda items and dedicate a specific number of working days to each segment.³⁰ The High-Level Segment and HLPF, established by General Assembly resolution 67/290 and jointly guided by ECOSOC and the General Assembly, focus on the implementation progress of the SDGs.³¹ The Coordination Segment meets

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 68/1 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC YOUTH FORUM 2021 – commemorating its 10th Anniversary*, 2021.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*.

¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 68/1 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*, 2018, p. 3; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members; Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

¹⁹ Ibid; Ibid.

²⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992.

²¹ Ibid.

²² UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Bureau*.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ IISD, *ECOSOC President Offers Preview of 2022 Session*, 2021.

²⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992, p. 1.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)*, 2013, p. 4.

³¹ UN General Assembly, *Format and Organizational Aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC High-level Segment*, 2019; UN, *High-Level*

annually upon the discretion of the Council and focuses on carrying out the recommendations brought forth by the High-level Segment.³² The Operational Activities Segment meets annually after the “first regular sessions of the executive boards of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system,” and focuses on providing guidance to ECOSOC on the implementation and strategies established by the General Assembly.³³ The Humanitarian Affairs Segment is held in June and focuses on strengthening assistance from Member States on humanitarian emergencies with the additional goal of transitioning relief efforts towards development efforts.³⁴ Lastly, the Integration Segment focuses on consolidating “all the inputs of Member States, the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders and to promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.”³⁵

ECOSOC oversees 14 subsidiary bodies and forums that hold their own sessions and provide recommendations, draft resolutions, and annual reports to the Council and, in some cases, to other bodies.³⁶ The two most common types of subsidiary bodies are functional, which focus on specific issues, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and regional commissions that focus on geopolitical topics, such as the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).³⁷ Other subsidiary bodies include standing, ad hoc, expert, and other related bodies.³⁸ Examples of subsidiary bodies include: the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations, which serves as a standing committee; the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, which serves as an ad hoc body; and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which serves as an expert body.³⁹ Each subsidiary body has adopted specific methods of work to align with its mandate, and methods are updated regularly.⁴⁰

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Article 62(1) of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) mandates that ECOSOC “may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters,” including human rights and freedoms, to present to the General Assembly and to UN specialized agencies.⁴¹ ECOSOC may also provide information and assist the Security Council when addressing humanitarian crises, including public health emergencies.⁴² For instance, ECOSOC has continually addressed COVID-19 and held an informal briefing on “Joining Forces: Effective Policy Solutions for Covid-19 Response” on 11 May 2020.⁴³ As emphasized by recent reforms accentuating this role, ECOSOC also provides coordination, monitoring, and advice to UN programs, agencies, and funds on international development policies and their implementation.⁴⁴ To further allow for coordination, a 2007 reform of ECOSOC brought forth by General Assembly resolution 61/16, established the High-level

Political Forum, *Lessons Learned from the First Cycle of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)*, 2019.

³² UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)*, 2013, p. 4.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁶ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

³⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ UN General Assembly, *Format and Organizational Aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013, p. 7.

⁴¹ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

⁴² UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Special Meetings on Emergency Situations*.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Progress in the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (E/RES/2013/5)*, 2013, p. 1; UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

Segment, an annual meeting that brings together representatives from governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society to discuss development cooperation.⁴⁵

In addition to overseeing its subsidiary bodies, ECOSOC's mechanisms allow for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to consult on the work of the UN.⁴⁶ There are more than 5,000 NGOs that have been granted ECOSOC consultative status, allowing them to attend and participate in various UN meetings, conferences, and special sessions and participate in international discussions.⁴⁷ By obtaining consultative status, these NGOs are allowed to provide insight to different UN bodies, discussion, and policies as they pertain to specialized topics and regions.⁴⁸ Applications for consultative status are considered by ECOSOC's Committee on NGOs, which was established in 1946 and is made up of 19 Member States.⁴⁹ The Committee on NGOs directly reports to ECOSOC on the procedural and substantive matters raised by NGOs.⁵⁰ ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 (1996) defines the principles, eligibility requirements, rules, procedures, obligations, and responsibilities for NGOs and the UN in establishing the consultative relationship.⁵¹ While the Committee on NGOs has postponed its meetings due to COVID-19, at its 1 September 2018 session, the Committee granted consultative status to 219 NGOs, deferred an additional 198 NGOs for consideration in 2020, and reviewed quadrennial reports of suspended NGOs, which resulted in the reinstatement of 37 organizations and the removal of 115 organizations.⁵²

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

ECOSOC's Commission on Population and Development met from 25-29 April 2022 on the theme of "Population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth" to consider topics including rising inequality, shifting global demographics, the debt crises in the developing world, and increased gender-based violence specifically towards women.⁵³ The commission considered reports of the Secretary-General on programmes and interventions for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development in the context of population and sustainable development, in particular sustained and inclusive economic growth (E/CN.9/2022/3) and on the flow of financial resources for assisting in the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (E/CN.9/2022/4).⁵⁴ Additionally, significant focus during the fifty-fifth session was placed on investments in family planning services and national health systems for women in developing nations.⁵⁴

From 23-25 June 2021, ECOSOC's Humanitarian Affairs Segment met in Geneva, Switzerland under the theme "Strengthening humanitarian assistance to face the challenges of 2021 and beyond: mobilizing respect for international humanitarian law, inclusion, gender, innovation and partnerships."⁵⁵ The high-level panel discussions and events focused on areas affected by the pandemic, such as healthcare in the times of COVID-19, innovation as a driver of change through the use of emerging technologies and humanitarian data, and humanitarian action and climate change with an emphasis on strengthening

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)*, 2006.

⁴⁶ UN DESA, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*, 2022.

⁴⁷ UN ECOSOC, *List of Non-governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council as of 1 September 2018 (E/2019/INF/5)*, 2018.

⁴⁸ UN DESA, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*, 2022.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN DESA, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*; UN ECOSOC, *Consultative Relationship Between the United Nations and Non-governmental Organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, 1996, pp. 53-61.

⁵² UN DGC, *Concluding Session, Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations Recommends Status for 219 Groups, Adopts Report Containing 2020 Meeting Schedule*, 2019; UN DESA, *The Committee on NGOs*, 2020.

⁵³ UN News, *Population and Development Commission: 'Perfect Storm' of crises take shape*, 2022.

⁵⁴ UN Commission on Population and Development, *Commission on Population and Development, fifty-fifth session (2022)*, 2022.

⁵⁴ UN News, *Population and Development Commission: 'Perfect Storm' of crises take shape*, 2022.

⁵⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2021.

resilience and enhancing collaboration in response to the climate crisis.⁵⁶ Additionally, a high-level event was held on Gender Equality - Leadership, decision-making, and participation of women and girls in humanitarian settings.⁵⁷ The informal event jointly convened by the Operational Activities Segment and the Human Affairs Segment on 22 June 2021 discussed the transition from relief to development under the theme “Preventing the looming risk of multiple famines and addressing rising acute food insecurity: taking action to save lives and reduce people’s needs, risks and vulnerabilities through closer humanitarian, development and peacebuilding collaboration.”⁵⁸

In July, 2021, the Secretary-General addressed the HLPF, emphasizing four measures to continue addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, including access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments, ambitious climate action, investment in more equal and inclusive societies, and financing for development.⁵⁹ The 2021 annual HLPF was held from 6-15 July 2021 in New York under the theme “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.”⁶⁰ As part of the 2021 HLPF, 42 Member States presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), outlining their progress on the SDGs.⁶¹ The draft ministerial declaration of the HLPF highlighted participants’ commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals Summit’s Political Declaration, which was adopted in September 2019.⁶² The draft declaration further recognizes the need for an immediate and global ceasefire, improved resilience, universal access to social protection and health services, and strengthened cooperation.⁶³ In efforts to address multilateral progress on SDGs, the Government of Botswana partnered with the United Nations 11-13 April 2022 in hosting a global webinar to support countries presenting VNRs during HLPF in 2022.⁶⁴

To ensure that our societies recover in a fairer and more sustainable manner, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its 17 SDGs need to guide the recovery efforts by all governments and actors.⁶⁵ Additionally, ECOSOC President Collen Vixen Kelapile stated that the UN is committed to combating the COVID-19 pandemic and all governments and actors can “ensure that our societies recover in a fairer and more sustainable manner” by implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs.⁶⁶ The theme determined by the General Assembly for the 2022 HLPF will be “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”⁶⁷ HLPF met in July 2022 in New York to review SDG 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 17 (partnerships for the goals).⁶⁸ Additionally, 45 countries are slated to carry out voluntary national reviews

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian Affairs Segment, 2020*; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Joint Informal Event of the Operational Activities and Humanitarian Affairs Segments Transition from Relief to Development: “Preventing the looming risk of multiple famines and addressing rising acute food insecurity: taking action to save lives and reduce people’s needs, risks and vulnerabilities through closer humanitarian, development and peacebuilding collaboration”*, 2021, pp. 1.

⁵⁹ UN Secretary-General, *Secretary-General’s remarks to the Opening of the Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 2021*.

⁶⁰ UN ECOSOC, *High-Level Political Forum 2021 Under the Auspices of ECOSOC, 2021*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² UN ECOSOC, *Ministerial Declaration of the High-level Segment of the 2020 Session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Convened Under the Auspices of the Council, on the Theme “Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development”: Advance Version (E/2020/L.20–E/HLPF/2020/L.1)*, 2020, p. 3.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 3-7.

⁶⁴ UN HLPF, *Countries gather in Botswana to discuss their efforts to implement the SDGs, 2022*.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Opening Statement by H.E. Mr. Collen Vixen Kelapile President of the Economic and Social Council, During the 2022 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, 2022*.

⁶⁷ UN ECOSOC, *High-Level Political Forum 2022 Under the Auspices of ECOSOC, 2022*.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

for HLPF 2022 including Argentina, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Togo, and Uruguay, among other member states.⁶⁹

The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of UN system operational activities (QCPR) is a tool for Member States to provide policy recommendations to the UN development system and the 2021 QCPR was generally regarded as successful by participants.⁷⁰ In the context of the QCPR, Secretary-General Guterres stressed that the COVID-19 crisis has both exposed the shortcomings of international cooperation, and demonstrated its untapped value and potential.⁷¹ The Secretary-General specifically noted that "The COVID-19 pandemic has also been a litmus test for the new Resident Coordinator system and the repositioned United Nations development system" concluding that, "Based on evidence available thus far, it is a test we have passed with a solid score."⁷² The inputs generated by the 2021 Operational Activities Segment were given to the General Assembly during its General Debate in fall 2021.⁷³ The Operational Activities for Development Segment (OAS) meets annually to provide overall guidance to the governing bodies of the United Nations development system.⁷⁴ The 2022 OAS was held in New York from 17 to 19 May 2022.⁷⁵ Oriented around eight sessions, Member States discussed support for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the role of regional leadership in supporting countries, and the Annual Report of the Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group among other topics.⁷⁶

The 2022 Youth Forum took place virtually on 19 and 20 April following the theme of "Building back better from COVID- 19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda."⁷⁷ In addition to COVID-19 response, the forum reviewed quality education, gender equality, life below water, life on land, and partnerships for the goals.⁷⁸

Conclusion

ECOSOC has demonstrated a commitment to mobilizing resources and building efforts to address key priority issues, including the promotion of development and the formation and maintenance of international partnerships, such as partnerships with business entities for the purpose of.⁷⁹ As the Council's current President, Collen Vixen Kelapile states, "ECOSOC must rise to the occasion" of helping global recovery from COVID-19, and wage "a spirited war against disease, poverty and inequality, impacts of climate change."⁸⁰

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http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf14/the_new_ecosoc_31_march_2014.pdf

This report was published in accordance with the changes and reforms that were made to allow ECOSOC to better fulfil its mandate. The report outlines the key points made within General Assembly resolution 68/1 (2013) and the new set of priorities for ECOSOC in addressing global issues. Additionally, the chart included in the document highlights the yearly schedule of ECOSOC as well as its meeting structure. Delegates would find this useful in understanding ECOSOC's current mandate and structure that extends beyond Chapter X of the Charter of the United Nations.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ UN ECOSOC, *2021 ECOSOC Operational Activities for Development Segment Chair's Summary*, 2021, p. 4.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., p. 2.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ UN ECOSOC, *What is the Operational Activities for Development Segment (OAS)?*, 2021.

⁷⁵ UN ECOSOC, *The 2021 Operational Activities for Development Segment*, 2021.

⁷⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Operational Activities for Development Segment 17-19 May 2022 Draft Programme*, 2022.

⁷⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Youth Forum "COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future."*, 2022.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

⁸⁰ UN DGC, *New ECOSOC President aims to maximize 'reach, relevance and impact*, 2021.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2020). *Accelerated Action and Transformative Pathways: Realizing the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development, Report of the Secretary-General (E/2020/59)*. Retrieved 28 April 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/e/2020/59>

This Report of the Secretary-General was published on 8 May 2020 in preparation for the 2020 HLPF. In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, the report notes key areas that can have a significant socioeconomic impact on people's wellbeing. In line with the provisional agendas, the report also addresses areas such as energy and extreme poverty. Delegates would find this document useful in understanding the priorities of ECOSOC and the background of HLPF 2020.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-eighth session. (2013). *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)*. Retrieved 28 April 2022 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/68/1>

While Chapter X of the Charter of the United Nations established the foundation of ECOSOC that is held to this day, its operational work and priorities have shifted along with the change in the UN's priorities. General Assembly resolution 68/1 strengthened ECOSOC's role within the UN system, and revised the segment system of ECOSOC, changing it to its current five segment approach, and establishing high-level and multi-stakeholder forums. It is highly recommended that delegates familiarize themselves with the content of this monumental resolution to understand the current foundation of ECOSOC.

United Nations, High Level Political Forum. (2022). *Voluntary National Reviews at the 2021 High-level political forum on sustainable development*. Retrieved 29 April 2022 from:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/28317BN_HLPF_2021_Secretariat_VNR_Main_Messages.pdf

This report of the Voluntary National Reviews was published in concurrence with the 2021 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The report indicates the regional representation of countries completing VNRs in 2021, and also compiles these reports with the total number of presentations since 2016 when the presentation initiative began. This report specifically highlights COVID-19 recovery plans and provides guiding questions valuable for interpreting and applying VARs presented in 2021.

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1. Fostering Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth

Introduction

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, international economic growth had been stagnant.⁸¹ Global real gross domestic product (GDP) growth was only around 2% between 2014–18; in 2019, the increase of global real GDP per capita was only 1.3%.⁸² However, since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, global real GDP growth declined by an estimated 5.3%, and employment numbers have declined by 8.8% of global working hours when compared with the last quarter of 2019.⁸³ This resulted in rising poverty levels and greater challenges in recovery among more vulnerable and marginalized populations.⁸⁴ Many countries only expect to be returning to pre-pandemic numbers by 2022 or 2023, which heavily sets back growth and recovery.⁸⁵ Particularly for women and youth, the pandemic will decrease prospects for them to pursue education or employment opportunities, even as employment numbers begin to recover.⁸⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these inequalities.⁸⁷ The spread of COVID-19 infections has reduced income and working time, drastically slowing down global economic growth.⁸⁸ According to the International Monetary Fund, having inclusive and sustainable growth measures is crucial in addressing inequality, reducing poverty, and increasing living standards and job opportunities.⁸⁹ High levels of inequality within a country can adversely impact long-term growth prospects, social mobility, and macroeconomic stability, which heavily affects more vulnerable and marginalized populations.⁹⁰

The Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) focus on inclusive and sustainable economic growth works to create long-term opportunities for human development and efficient resource management.⁹¹ Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth falls most in line with the goals and objectives of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly's resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).⁹² The passing of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) introduced the ideas of sustainable growth and development with particular emphasis on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which focuses on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth.⁹³

Inclusive economic growth is necessary to address rising inequality and its effect on development.⁹⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of many global systems and infrastructures, as they have been unable to adequately respond to the needs of the global population.⁹⁵ Inequalities are especially prevalent in developing countries, who cannot adequately react to the increasing infection rates and do not have access to both vaccines and sufficient healthcare services.⁹⁶ The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) describes inclusivity as economic growth that creates equal opportunities and is fairly distributed across societies.⁹⁷ Sustainability refers to growth that is resilient over time, adapt to rising challenges of climate change that will affect future generations, and encompass all three dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, and

⁸¹ UN DESA, *SDG Indicators*.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ IMF, *Fostering Inclusive Growth*, 2017.

⁹⁰ IMF, *Fostering Inclusive Growth*, 2017.

⁹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Brief I. ECOSOC mandates and evolution of functions*.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ OECD, *OECD work on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

environmental).⁹⁸ The UN defines sustainable economic growth as being able to sustain per capita at least 7% gross domestic growth per annum in least developed countries (LDCs).⁹⁹

International and Regional Framework

Outlined in Chapter IX and X of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), the mandate of ECOSOC focuses on promoting higher standards of living and employment and economic and social progress.¹⁰⁰ ECOSOC works to address the complex challenges of environmental, social, and economic issues on sustainable development.¹⁰¹ However, since its inception, its roles and responsibilities have expanded to encompass and address key international issues, such as increasing inequality and poverty, that have arisen in the twenty-first century.¹⁰²

ECOSOC is responsible for overseeing the monitoring and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and offer broader assistance to advancing the UN sustainable development agenda.¹⁰³ The post-2015 development agenda builds upon the Millennium Development Goals from 2000; among its many goals, the post-2015 development agenda highlights the importance of eradicating poverty and providing equal opportunities and inclusivity for all women and girls.¹⁰⁴ The 2030 Agenda also acknowledges that ending global poverty (SDG 1) is closely related to policies that build economic growth; however, it is also necessary to address social and environmental issues, such as education (SDG 4), health (SDG 3), job creation, environmental pollution, and climate change (SDG 13).¹⁰⁵ All these issues are intertwined and interconnected, as they will all need to be addressed by governments and international institutions to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth.¹⁰⁶

Additional General Assembly resolutions have been adopted to provide further guidance for advancing development across the international system, such as resolution 70/299 and resolution 75/290 B; these resolutions promote coherence among the General Assembly and its main committees, ECOSOC, and the specialized agencies that report to the Council, and other intergovernmental bodies to review the working methods and agendas.¹⁰⁷

In 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was convened to establish practical measures for addressing and implementing sustainable development measures, resulting in the document entitled *The Future We Want: Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–22 June 2012*.¹⁰⁸ *The Future We Want* (2011) highlights the importance of addressing all three aspects of sustainable development and recognizing the interlinkages between them.¹⁰⁹ This outcome document states that climate change is “an inevitable and global challenge” that will affect the long-term sustainable development of all countries.¹¹⁰ The framework supports green economy policies as a possible solution to support poverty eradication and sustainable development, as it will help manage natural resources sustainably and reduce negative environmental harms.¹¹¹ This document also recognizes the necessity of people-centric sustainable development to

⁹⁸ OECD, *OECD work on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

⁹⁹ SDG Tracker, *Sustainable Development Goal 8*.

¹⁰⁰ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

¹⁰¹ UN ECOSOC, *Brief I. ECOSOC mandates and evolution of functions*.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2015 Development Agenda*.

¹⁰⁴ UNODC, *Post-2015 Development Agenda*; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Söderholm, *The green economy transition: the challenges of technological change for sustainability*, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level (A/RES/70/299)*, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/305 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/75/290B)*, 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20*, 2012; UN General Assembly, *The future we want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

¹⁰⁹ UN General Assembly, *The future we want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

¹¹⁰ UN DESA, *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*, 2022.

¹¹¹ UN General Assembly, *The future we want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

promote inclusive economic growth to benefit everyone.¹¹² This involves fostering social inclusion and welfare particularly among poor and vulnerable populations in developing countries, such as closing technology gaps and equalizing opportunities for both men and women.¹¹³

As a result of Rio+20, the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) were both adopted to monitor and further address issues of inclusive, sustainable growth and development.¹¹⁴ The HLPF was established under ECOSOC to follow-up and review the progress of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.¹¹⁵ The HLPF was formed to strengthen sustainable development governance at the UN and provide leadership, recommendations, and guidance for sustainable development.¹¹⁶ The 10YFP was established to enhance international cooperation towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns to support capacity building, social development, and environmental sustainability.¹¹⁷

Role of the International System

Member States are encouraged to conduct regular progress reports nationally and submit the results to the HLPF to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda.¹¹⁸ In addition to the HLPF, the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) and General Assembly resolution 72/305, “Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council” (2018), both address the updates and recommendations in response to meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda.¹¹⁹ As a core function of ECOSOC, the DCF also encourages international coordination and cooperation across many international actors, such as experts and international organizations and development banks, to address international development cooperation.¹²⁰ General Assembly resolution 72/305 also reaffirms the importance of inclusivity when implementing and addressing the gaps of the 2030 Agenda.¹²¹

Other UN agencies, such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), were also responsible for following up on the progress of major UN conferences and summits.¹²² The DESA also publishes detailed progress on the SDGs and the year-to-year changes in growth and employment numbers, for instance.¹²³ They assist countries in converting these goals into national policies, offer support for capacity-building, and advocate for outreach for the SDGs.¹²⁴

In 2015, for ECOSOC’s Integration Segment, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) discussed how it can collaborate and develop partnerships with other actors in and out of the UN system.¹²⁵ UNEP focuses on environmental sustainable development; one of the ways that the UNEP

¹¹² UN General Assembly, *The future we want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, 2012*; UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013.

¹¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ SDG Knowledge Platform, *The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP)*, 2014.

¹¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013.

¹¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*, 2018.

¹²⁰ UN ECOSOC, *About the Development Cooperation Forum*.

¹²¹ UN General Assembly, *Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/1 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*, 2018.

¹²² UN DESA, *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, 2021*.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ ECOSOC, *Contribution to the 2015 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Integration Segment, 2015*.

addresses this is through the green economy.¹²⁶ The Green Economy Initiative (GEI) was introduced in 2008 to encourage research and investments that support sustainable development.¹²⁷ Over the years, the GEI has evolved to promote inclusivity: the Inclusive Green Economy (IGE) is efficient and clean in production and inclusive in outcomes and consumption.¹²⁸ This initiative is aimed at expanding choices and opportunities for national economies and integrating employment growth—while providing both economic and social protections and environmental sustainability.¹²⁹

The General Assembly adopted two resolutions that highlights the important linkages at addressing COVID-19 to advance sustainable growth.¹³⁰ General Assembly resolutions 74/306, “Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic” (2020) and 74/307, “United response against global health threats: combating COVID-19” (2020) both emphasize the importance of international cooperation and urgency of the crisis, as it obstructs progress and development of achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.¹³¹ To address the pandemic, the international community must work on allocating scarce resources sufficiently, addressing the needs of more vulnerable populations, increasing development and funding for vaccines and medication, and supporting economies to protect workers and businesses.¹³²

In February of 2022, the ECOSOC Partnership Forum convened to discuss the work of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies prior to the high-level segment (HLS) of ECOSOC.¹³³ The theme of this year is, “Building back better from the COVID-19 while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”¹³⁴ Stakeholders to this consultation forum included 56 countries, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutions, and local governments.¹³⁵ Stakeholders helped identify the key priorities that should be discussed to focus on long-term, sustainable development that will bring “transformative change.”¹³⁶ These priorities include improved access to healthcare and educational opportunities, equitable vaccine distributions, environmental and climate action, and greater local community engagement on addressing the SDGs.¹³⁷ In addition, stakeholders were asked to contribute ideas and suggestions of priorities that should be discussed during ECOSOC and HLPF’s meetings.¹³⁸ One of the priorities identified by the body is inclusive participation and youth engagement and improvement to health and educational infrastructures.¹³⁹

Environmental Concerns to Sustainable Growth

Environmental challenges and concerns are important to address when discussing sustainable and inclusive development, as it is the third dimension of sustainable development.¹⁴⁰ As highlighted by SDG 13 (climate action), increased floods and droughts caused by climate change destroy many important ecosystems and affect billions of lives worldwide.¹⁴¹ Climate change is expected to affect the availability

¹²⁶ UNEP, *UN Environment’s Green Economy Initiative*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ UN General Assembly, *Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (A/RES/74/306)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *United response against global health threats: combating COVID-19 (A/RES/74/307)*, 2020.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ UN DESA, *2022 United Nations ECOSOC Partnership Forum Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Summary Report*, 2021.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Söderholm, *The green economy transition: the challenges of technological change for sustainability*, 2020.

¹⁴¹ UN DESA, *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*, 2022.

of necessities, such as access to fresh water and energy and food security.¹⁴² This particularly affects LDCs who are least capable of coping with the shocks to their economic, social, and natural systems.¹⁴³ UNEP and OECD emphasize the importance and necessity of addressing sustainable growth through the idea of a green economy.¹⁴⁴ The goal of the green economy is to promote sustainable economic growth while preserving environmental and health risks, social welfare, and employment for future generations.¹⁴⁵ OECD built a framework called Green Growth Strategy that highlights the necessity of preventing environmental damage to achieve sustainable growth and development.¹⁴⁶ This framework emphasizes the importance of governments to seize economic opportunities to transition to a green economy and how to monitor this progress, as economic, social, and environmental development are intertwined.¹⁴⁷ Fostering economic growth through the green economy is necessary as growth continues to wear down national capital.¹⁴⁸ Environmental sustainability is necessary to prevent further damages to the surrounding ecosystems, as it would lead to further environmental degradation from water scarcity, more pollution, and climate change if left unaddressed.¹⁴⁹

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and One Planet network work conjointly with ECOSOC to promote resource efficiency and sustainability and connecting global stakeholders to achieve sustainable growth and development.¹⁵⁰ The EPA offers expertise to One Planet network, while One Planet network focuses on facilitating knowledge exchange on projects to other international actors.¹⁵¹ Both organizations are part of the 10YFP, which provides another framework for countries to enhance international cooperation and achieve sustainable development and growth.¹⁵² The 10YFP is a framework established from Rio+20 that promotes capacity building, sustainable consumption and production, and resource efficiency at the national level in both developed and developing countries.¹⁵³ The 10YFP aims to increase economic activities that will promote social development, poverty eradication, and environmental sustainability to achieve global sustainable development.¹⁵⁴ Also, with limited resources worldwide, widely adopting and implementing sustainable consumption and production is essential for sustainable development and the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs.¹⁵⁵

Challenges to Growth Due to COVID-19

While the average global economic growth had slowed before the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic has caused financial and economic shocks that have disrupted market volatility and furthered uncertainty throughout the global economy.¹⁵⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic is not just a health crisis, but an economic crisis as well.¹⁵⁷ The economic impact of the pandemic is felt particularly amongst developing states economies who do not have the sufficient resources to recover from the crisis.¹⁵⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic further emphasized the inequalities within the social and economic systems in many countries and has affected much of the labor force.¹⁵⁹ For example, many women are forced out of the labor force

¹⁴² UN DESA, *Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*, 2022.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ UNEP, *UN Environment's Green Economy Initiative*; OECD, *OECD work on Green Growth, 2015–16*, 2016.

¹⁴⁵ UNEP, *UN Environment's Green Economy Initiative*.

¹⁴⁶ OECD, *OECD work on Green Growth, 2015–16*, 2016.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ EPA, *10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production*.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ HLPF on Sustainable Development, *10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ UN DESA, *SDG Indicators*.

¹⁵⁷ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *Remarks to the ECOSOC Forum on Financing Sustainable Development in the Context of COVID-19*, 2020.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ UN DESA, *SDG Indicators*.

to care for their children who may be stuck at home because schools and daycares are closed.¹⁶⁰ The UN Secretary-General has emphasized that issues that must be prioritized are debt alleviation, including waivers on interest payments, and designing monetary and fiscal policies that offer resources to assist households and workers with health and unemployment insurance to prevent substantial job losses.¹⁶¹ Secretary-General António Guterres calls for a coordinated response from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank Group, and other international financial institutions to provide a global stimulus package and offer resources and support to restore sustainable growth.¹⁶² Without addressing these issues, inequalities will continue to exacerbate growth and development within the global economy.¹⁶³

The UN and ECOSOC have addressed these vulnerabilities and volatility pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic through the ECOSOC Forum on Financing Sustainable Development in the Context of COVID-19.¹⁶⁴ The UN Secretary-General also outlined a response to the pandemic that requires a three-prong approach: suppress the virus, adopt a large-scale response for socioeconomic consequences facing vulnerable populations, and recover better from inequalities that result from unsustainable economies.¹⁶⁵ Addressing the challenges caused by the pandemic is essential in fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth, as equity and growth cannot occur from the reduction of the labor force and real GDP across the globe.¹⁶⁶ As a result of COVID-19, trade and tourism, which are large components of GDP growth in many countries, have decreased significantly since the pandemic.¹⁶⁷ In many countries, international tourism is not expected to reach its 2019 levels until 2023, which will set back growth and development in this area of the economy.¹⁶⁸

The UN recognizes that ECOSOC's 2022 Partnership Forum re-established the idea that addressing SDGs and COVID-19 must go hand-in-hand.¹⁶⁹ As vulnerable populations are suffering from the pandemic the most, inclusive and sustainable growth cannot occur without addressing the needs of these populations first.¹⁷⁰ A global online stakeholder consultation was established prior to the forum to submit views and proposals on solutions and policies to resolve the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing the SDGs.¹⁷¹ Among all the proposals submitted, some of the key points that were highlighted by the body were ensuring sustainable development, inclusion of all groups of people, particularly those more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic, and access to inclusive healthcare systems.¹⁷²

Conclusion

One of ECOSOC's main priorities is to promote higher standards of living and employment and economic and social progress and address the complex challenges of environmental, social, and economic issues on sustainable development.¹⁷³ These interconnected issues encompass many SDGs, such as SDG 1 (no poverty), 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 13 (climate action), which offer challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic growth globally, if

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *The recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must lead to a different economy*, 2020.

¹⁶² UN Office of the Secretary-General, *Remarks to the ECOSOC Forum on Financing Sustainable Development in the Context of COVID-19*, 2020.

¹⁶³ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *The recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must lead to a different economy*, 2020.

¹⁶⁴ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *Remarks to the ECOSOC Forum on Financing Sustainable Development in the Context of COVID-19*, 2020.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ UN DESA, *SDG Indicators*.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ UN DESA, *2022 United Nations ECOSOC Partnership Forum Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Summary Report*, 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ UN ECOSOC, *Brief I. ECOSOC mandates and evolution of functions*.

not addressed altogether.¹⁷⁴ The green economy that is discussed by many organizations, such as UNEP and OCED, offer methods that can promote economic growth while considering sustainability and additional environmental damages.¹⁷⁵ This involves developing institutions that promote sustainable consumption and production and allocating scarce resources more efficiency.¹⁷⁶ However, there are multiple ways to achieve sustainable growth and development, as conditions in each country differs significantly, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution.¹⁷⁷ To achieve inclusive and sustainable growth, economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development cannot be separated, as they are all necessary to address this complex issue.¹⁷⁸ With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, challenges such as increasing inequality and lack of social protections, prove to be a problem to growth and development, especially among developing economies.¹⁷⁹

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: How does ECOSOC address growth through all three elements of sustainable development (economic, social, and environmental)? How should ECOSOC ensure that its policies are inclusive to all populations? How effective is the HLPF in monitoring progress of ECOSOC's goals and the 2030 Agenda? What are some ways Member States can incorporate the green economy into their sustainable development agenda? How will addressing the social and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic help achieve SDG 8 and inclusive and sustainable economic growth? Are there any other challenges to sustainable economic growth that is not related to the COVID-19 pandemic or environmental delegation?

Annotated Bibliography

SDG Tracker. (n.d.). *Sustainable Development Goal 8*. Retrieved 10 February 2022 from: <https://sdg-tracker.org/economic-growth>

This resource outlines the targets and indicators of SDG 8 and outlines all its intricacies. This resource also includes links for additional information and research on each target, along with global data and statistics of progress made throughout the years. This is particularly relevant to delegates who want to familiarize themselves with SDG 8 and all its detailed components.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2021). *Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all*. Retrieved 7 February 2022 from: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>

This report outlines the annual progress of SDG 8 and details the current state of the global economy. This report is extremely detailed in providing how much progress has been made within the year and specific statistics on the development of growth and employment. The report is relevant to delegates who want to understand the current progress made towards meeting SDG 8 and how it has evolved year-to-year.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2021). *2022 United Nations ECOSOC Partnership Forum Global Online Stakeholder Consultation: Summary Report, 2021*. Retrieved 9 March 2022 from: https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/online%20consultation%20report_final.pdf

This document highlights the most recent actions that ECOSOC has outlined to address the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of social and economic development. This report details what each stakeholder (among this forum) finds important to discuss by ECOSOC and the HLPF and accepts suggestions from the international community. This resource is important to delegates

¹⁷⁴ UNEP, *UN Environment's Green Economy Initiative*; SDG, *Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all*.

¹⁷⁵ UNEP, *UN Environment's Green Economy Initiative*.

¹⁷⁶ HLPF on Sustainable Development, *10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*.

¹⁷⁷ UNEP, *UN Environment's Green Economy Initiative*.

¹⁷⁸ OECD, *OECD work on Green Growth, 2015–16, 2016*.

¹⁷⁹ UN Office of the Secretary-General, *Deputy Secretary-General's remarks at the meeting of members of the OECD Council on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2022*.

who want to learn more about the different inputs from the international system about the COVID-19 pandemic and which priorities and challenges are necessary to address.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.). *Mandate of the ECOSOC integration segment*. Retrieved 5 February 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/node/50050>

This resource outlines the mandate of ECOSOC and the progression of ECOSOC's role throughout the years. This resource also provides a detailed timeline of relevant resolutions that have transformed and expanded ECOSOC's functions over time. This is important for delegates who want to know the roles and capabilities of ECOSOC and how it has changed and evolved over the years.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 3 February 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/1>

This resolution outlines the details of the 2030 Agenda, which is a key aspect for this topic. This resource is important to be familiar with to understand the many dimensions of sustainable development and growth. This resource is relevant to delegates who want to be familiar with the origin and details of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs including how they have evolved since its inception.

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2. Addressing Economic Inequalities and Global Humanitarian Needs

“We must stand and work together in partnerships to urgently address the immediate humanitarian needs while tackling underlying vulnerabilities to conflict, climate change, inequalities, and increasing disease risk. We must be proactive, innovative, and agile.”¹⁸⁰

Introduction

In 2022 alone, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection in some form, which is an increase from the 235 million people needing assistance in 2021.¹⁸¹ The United Nations (UN) and organizations they work with aim to help around 183 million people, which will cost around \$41 billion, leaving 91 million people without the prospect of aid.¹⁸² Furthermore, these figures do not take into account crises that may arise in the course of the year, such as what is happening in Ukraine, Yemen, and Afghanistan.¹⁸³

The term economic inequality refers to the distribution of economic opportunities among populations and between countries.¹⁸⁴ Opportunities can refer to anything from imbalances in income or wealth and education to health and nutrition options.¹⁸⁵ These can impact the outcome of one's involvement in society and one's personal wellbeing.¹⁸⁶ Two main aspects of economic equality relate to the inequality of opportunities, such as schooling and job opportunities, and outcomes, which refers to how one is positioned in a society that offers employment, healthcare, and educational opportunities.¹⁸⁷

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was created to allow people globally to “live to their full potential” and to “live free of existential want.”¹⁸⁸ Since its creation in 1945, however, ECOSOC has become used to addressing humanitarian events and works continuously to bring together UN Member States, UN organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and the communities affected by crises.¹⁸⁹ ECOSOC's Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) was first held in 1998 to respond to natural and man-made disasters, ranging from earthquakes to armed conflicts.¹⁹⁰

The closest that ECOSOC comes to a definition of humanitarian affairs relates to its HAS, which they define as a platform that brings together UN Member States, UN agencies, humanitarian and development organizations, the private sector, and affected communities to better address crises and humanitarian events through collaborative means.¹⁹¹ The HAS Platform meets in June every year to discuss and agree on how to address pressing humanitarian concerns and issues.¹⁹²

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) defines a humanitarian response plan as: “a plan that is prepared for a protracted or sudden emergency that requires international humanitarian assistance.”¹⁹³ These plans vary from country to country and focus on specific issues that each Member State is facing.¹⁹⁴ For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in partnership with OCHA, addresses displacement in Central Asia with the funds it receives.¹⁹⁵ OCHA also

¹⁸⁰ UN OCHA, *ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 2021*, 2021.

¹⁸¹ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Concepts of Inequality*, 2015.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, *The ECOSOC Handbook*, 2021, p. 11.

¹⁸⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2022.

¹⁹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of ECOSOC: Overview of ECOSOC Milestones*, 2016, p. 6.

¹⁹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2022.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ UN OCHA Humanitarian Response, *Humanitarian Response Plan*, 2022.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ UNHCR, *Central Asia*, 2022.

has a definition for humanitarian action, which it defines as “any assistance, protection, and advocacy in response to man-made or natural events, such as conflict or drought.”¹⁹⁶

The UN does not have a concrete term for humanitarian aid, but the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) states that the purpose of humanitarian aid is to maintain international co-operation in solving international problems related to economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian affairs.¹⁹⁷

Humanitarian engagement is defined by the OCHA as the partnerships created by humanitarian organizations organizing international and regional emergency responses to provide services such as protection of persons, assistance to those affected by a disaster or event, and relief to affected individuals and communities.¹⁹⁸ The Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP), as conceptualized by UNHCR, is a platform created in 2006 to bring together those working in humanitarian response, which includes the UN, related international organizations, and NGOs to coordinate their response efforts to natural and man-made disasters such as conflict.¹⁹⁹

International and Regional Framework

Since its inception, ECOSOC works to ensure that its efforts should be in conjunction with the international community and organizations that address its areas of concern, such as economic inequalities and humanitarian support.²⁰⁰ ECOSOC has been addressing humanitarian affairs since 1998 through the HAS.²⁰¹ HAS meets annually in June to discuss topics related to humanitarian affairs, and recently these meetings have addressed such things as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.²⁰² During the HAS meeting in June 2021, a side-panel was held focusing on financing humanitarian projects and the lessons learned by the world’s response to COVID-19.²⁰³ The meeting highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict, and the lack of funding provided for those in need could lead to “the unravelling of 40 years of progress.”²⁰⁴

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) was adopted by the General Assembly in 1948 as a response to the violence and humanitarian crisis experienced during the Second World War.²⁰⁵ Article 22 of the UDHR endows all people the “right to social security” through the cooperation between the UN and the resources provided by Member States.²⁰⁶ While the UDHR does not directly address humanitarian aid, it shows that the foundation of the UN’s work was based on the willingness to provide support in the local and global communities.²⁰⁷

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are goals that address persistent and far-reaching global issues such as gender inequality and clean energy.²⁰⁸ The SDGs were put into effect through the passing of General Assembly’s resolution 70/1, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in 2015.²⁰⁹ ECOSOC works at the center of the UN system’s programs on the three pillars

¹⁹⁶ UN OCHA, *OCHA Evaluation of Country-Based Pooled Funds*, 2019, p. 6.

¹⁹⁷ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

¹⁹⁸ Relief Web, *Glossary of Humanitarian Terms*, 2008, p. 32.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁰⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Committee on arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations approved by the Council (E/43)*, 1946.

²⁰¹ UN ECOSOC, *Humanitarian Affairs Segment*, 2021.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ UN ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, *Humanitarian financing in the current global environment: opportunities, challenges, and lessons from the Covid-19 response*, 2021.

²⁰⁴ UN ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, *Event Summary: Humanitarian financing in the current global environment: Opportunities, challenges, and lessons from the Covid-19 response*, 2021.

²⁰⁵ UN Department of Communications, *History of the Declaration*, 2022.

²⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ UN ECOSOC, *SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries*, 2022.

²⁰⁹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental.²¹⁰ It is also the main platform of action on sustainable development and the review processes.²¹¹ SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) focuses on providing all Member States and peoples with financial and social securities.²¹² One of the focuses of SDG 10 is reducing inequalities in funding for programs, as well as making migration practices safer for migrants and refugees.²¹³ In 2020, it was estimated that for every 100,000 persons, 311 are refugees, and that number has steadily grown in the last two years.²¹⁴ Regarding SDG 10, the ECOSOC Integration Segment's meeting in 2021 addressed the inequalities that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.²¹⁵ These inequalities were seen most in public health systems and human necessities, such as housing and sanitation.²¹⁶

The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* was adopted by the General Assembly in 2015 as a framework for the implementation and financing of the SDGs.²¹⁷ Section B, subsection 66 and 67 focus on financing projects that focus on sustainable development in post-conflict and ongoing conflict countries, specifically financing programs that focus on peacebuilding and sustainable development led through national and local organizations and entities.²¹⁸ Most importantly, subtopic 67 addresses peacebuilding financial gaps and the need to simplify the means through which national and local entities access funds at their disposal.²¹⁹

UN OCHA stemmed from General Assembly resolution 46/182, "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations" in 1991 to coordinate the UN's response to established and emerging humanitarian crises and emergencies.²²⁰ In 1991, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), but it was reorganized in 1998, which created OCHA.²²¹ From then on, OCHA's purpose was to coordinate humanitarian responses, promote the development of humanitarian-positive policy developments and support and engage in humanitarian advocacy.²²²

OCHA's Annual Report from 2020 discusses funding sources for its operations.²²³ It states that in 2020, 94% of OCHA's activities were funded by "voluntary contributions"; the rest came from the UN's budget, which is made up of contributions from Member States.²²⁴ OCHA is one of the entities of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, along with heads of the UN, NGO, and Red Cross entities.²²⁵ For example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee created the first ever system-wide global emergency activation, which led to a scaling-up of efforts to respond to the pandemic, such as supply chain management and mobilizing resources.²²⁶

Role of the International System

The *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022* was published by the UN-Coordinated Support to People Affected by Disaster and Conflict.²²⁷ The document uses 2021 data on humanitarian affairs to highlight

²¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Sustainable Development*, 2022.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² UN ECOSOC, *SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries*, 2022.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Integration Segment*, 2021, p. 2.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

²¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ UN OCHA, *History of OCHA*, 2022.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ UN OCHA, *Annual Report 2020*, 2020.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ UN-Coordinated Support to People Affected by Disaster and Conflict, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

the work of OCHA and CERF.²²⁸ This annual report gives a strong overview of the work that OCHA and CERF do in regards to humanitarian relief and funding resources, such as country-specific crisis situations.²²⁹ In 2021, over 5.5 million people in 6 countries that experienced famine received cash, livestock feed, and other products to help reduce the risks caused by prolonged drought.²³⁰

The UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) manages funding from Member States to be used in the event of unforeseen emergencies.²³¹ Created in 2006, it has since been able to provide \$5.5 billion worth of assistance in over 100 countries through funding from various actors within and outside of the UN, such as Member States and corporate donors.²³² CERF also allocates for Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs), which provide funds to a limited number of countries with predictable humanitarian crises, and these funds can be used at the local level to provide quick aid to those who need it most.²³³ For example, as of 1 May 2022, Ukraine has received \$60.5 million American dollars in aid this year due to conflict.²³⁴ In the same period of time, Yemen has received just under \$20 million American dollars in assistance from CERF, with another request for \$20 million American dollars presently under review.²³⁵ The CERF released a report outlining the funding it manages for OCHA in 2020.²³⁶ The report focuses on pooled funds and how they are used by Member States to respond to emergency situations that are unplanned or unexpected; current Member States using this system are Syria and Yemen.²³⁷ In 2020, \$835 million dollars were earmarked for conflict-related event responses while another \$257 million dollars were reserved for natural disaster responses.²³⁸ The report breaks down the accessibility of collective funds and highlights successes from 2019, such as the total number of people assisted with CERF funding, which was about 69.3 million people.²³⁹

In 2021, ECOSOC and the General Assembly released a joint report to the Secretary-General titled *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/76/74)*.²⁴⁰ The report highlights the most pressing crises for humanitarian affairs by country, such as increased violence in Cameroon and food insecurity in Ethiopia.²⁴¹ It also highlighted the key themes of 2020's humanitarian trends, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase of refugees and displaced persons.²⁴² A report by the same name published in 2019, specifically Section III, subsection D, focuses on the need for humanitarian organizations to seek funding for early action and preparedness initiatives rather than reactionary responses to disasters and continuing crises.²⁴³

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was created in 1863 in response to the needs of soldiers and civilians in conflict but has now changed its focus to the wellbeing of individuals in conflicts and humanitarian needs that have emerged since the end of the Second World War.²⁴⁴ An ICRC annual report from 2020 noted that the organization supplied 4.2 million people with food assistance and gave clean water access to 35 million people.²⁴⁵ In March 2022, the ICRC released a press release requesting 2.4 billion Swiss francs which would be used for support for the ICRC's work in Syria and Afghanistan.²⁴⁶

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ CERF, *Who We Are*, 2022.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ CERF, *OCHA-managed Pooled Funds*, 2020, p. 5.

²³⁴ CERF, *Allocation Summaries*, 2022.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ CERF, *OCHA-managed Pooled Funds*, 2020.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ CERF, *OCHA-managed Pooled Funds Overview*, 2020, p. 7.

²³⁹ Ibid., p. 10.

²⁴⁰ UN General Assembly and ECOSOC, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*, 2021.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁴⁴ ICRC, *History of the ICRC*, 2022.

²⁴⁵ ICRC, *Annual Report 2020*, 2020.

²⁴⁶ ICRC, *ICRC appeals for 2.4 billion Swiss francs for its operations in 2022*, 2022.

In the latter request for funds, the majority of their funding was earmarked for humanitarian assistance work they pursued.²⁴⁷ Although the ICRC and ECOSOC have not worked together on projects and initiatives, the ICRC still makes recommendations based on ECOSOC's work and initiatives.²⁴⁸

Humanitarian Action During Conflict

Political conflicts have had the largest impact on civilians, especially those who were in need due to food insecurity and drought prior to the onset of violence.²⁴⁹ According to the Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 report, 60% of all conflicts globally were fought violently in 2020.²⁵⁰ Conflicts can lead to further consequences, such as sexual violence and the destruction of natural and civilian infrastructures.²⁵¹ These circumstances can exacerbate economic inequality, especially to those who are internally displaced and refugees, as they fall outside the area of assistance.²⁵² This can be associated with aid and services being inaccessible to afflicted persons, such as educational programs for children and social security programs, because of living arrangements and the remoteness of certain locations.²⁵³

Two of the largest organizations that received funding from OCHA in 2020 were the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Save the Children.²⁵⁴ According to the NRC, 19% of its funding comes from the UN, including 5% from OCHA.²⁵⁵ The NRC has been active in countries with sustained conflict, such as Afghanistan, and their operations gave 762,076 Afghans aid in 2020.²⁵⁶ This is compared with the 700,000 Afghans who were newly displaced in 2021.²⁵⁷ Save the Children is a non-profit that works with refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) around the world, especially in areas inside or around conflict zones.²⁵⁸ Recent areas that Save the Children have focused on include Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, and Ukraine, and it also works in Greece, who has been hosting refugees fleeing Syria and the Middle East.²⁵⁹ Their aid has extended to training new mothers on infant and young children's nutrition and food support.²⁶⁰ Save the Children also hired teachers to help displaced children and young adults who attend Greek schools with their homework and learning Greek and English.²⁶¹ This allows for refugee children to be integrated into Greek society and gain employment or further education.²⁶² The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is also working in Ukraine, where it is providing food, clothing, and psychological services to refugees and IDPs.²⁶³

In 2020, the UNHCR oversees the wellbeing of 20.7 million refugees as well as 48 million IDPs globally.²⁶⁴ As an example of the UNHCR's work, as of March 2022, the Ukrainian conflict has led to the agency being tasked with protecting the 3.5 million refugees who fled the country and the 2.9 million estimated to be IDPs in the country.²⁶⁵

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ ICRC, *Strengthening coordination of UN humanitarian and disaster relief assistance: ICRC statement to the United Nations, ECOSOC HAS General Debate*, 2018.

²⁴⁹ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ ICRC, *ICRC to UN Security Council: Double impact of climate change and armed conflict harms people's ability to cope*, 2019; OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

²⁵² UN ECOSOC and UNDESA, *Policy Integration and the 2030 Agenda: Policy Tools and Approaches to Tackle Inequality*, 2016, p. 7.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ UN OCHA, *Appeals and response plans 2020, 2021*.

²⁵⁵ NRC, *Finances*, 2022.

²⁵⁶ NRC, *NRC in Afghanistan*, 2022.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Save the Children International, *Who we are*.

²⁵⁹ International Rescue Committee, *Greece*.

²⁶⁰ Save the Children UK, *Greece: We Fought for Refugee and Migrants*.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ International Rescue Committee, *Ukraine crisis*, 2022.

²⁶⁴ UNHCR, *Figures at a Glance*, 2022.

²⁶⁵ UNHCR, *Ukraine Emergency*, 2022.

The average income of people living in North America is 16 times higher than that of people in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁶⁶ Both the IRC and UNHCR work on the African continent, aiding refugees and IDPs fleeing numerous conflicts, such as the conflict in the Central African Republic; the IRC was able to aid 2.7 million refugees fleeing to Uganda in addition to the 5.5 million IDPs.²⁶⁷ In countries such as the Central African Republic and Burkina Faso, conflict and violence have led to 1.4 million and 2.2 million needing aid, respectively.²⁶⁸ They are also made vulnerable by climate change, which has had a wide impact on the African continent.²⁶⁹ According to the International Monetary Fund, the most severe impacts of climate change are concentrated in regions with already hot climates such as in Africa, where a large concentration of low-income countries are located.²⁷⁰

Humanitarian Action Due to Climate Change

People in low and lower-middle-income countries are five times more likely to be displaced by weather-related disasters compared to people in high-income countries.²⁷¹ Becoming increasingly connected with prolonged conflicts, climate change has been a contributing factor in humanitarian intervention.²⁷² The ECOSOC and General Assembly joint report in 2021 on *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/76/74)*, which details how 8 in 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change and climate-related events submitted a humanitarian appeal with 2 or more UN agencies.²⁷³ In 2016, studies related to climate change and economic inequalities showed that developing and least developed nations will suffer a reduction of up to 75% of the average income of inhabitants by the end of the century.²⁷⁴ This will only lead to a regression on the progress made through the 2030 Agenda, in addition to the progress lost due to the pandemic.²⁷⁵ These inequalities stem from the top down, which can lead to those who need the most aid not being able to receive it due to those who are prioritized, which can lead to other threats to a nation's social balance, such as war and political conflict.²⁷⁶ At the same time, those most responsible for carbon emissions, the richest 10% of nations, account for 50% of those emissions, showing how inequalities surrounding climate change put the most pressure on least developed nations with limited social safety nets and services available to their populations.²⁷⁷

The effects of climate change are felt hardest in developing nations.²⁷⁸ Low Human Development Index (HDI) countries, such as Kenya and Yemen, will face the strongest negative effects of climate change through both direct impact and because of limited capacities available to societies to deal with such changes.²⁷⁹ This does not include populations that are already marginalized and vulnerable, who will face more dire circumstances due to climate change.²⁸⁰ Despite the threat of climate change, the annual economic growth of wealthy nations with colder temperatures has increased while reducing the economic growth of nations with warmer climates.²⁸¹ This only shows how the threat of climate change negatively affects those from less developed parts of the world.²⁸²

²⁶⁶ UN Department of Communications, *Inequality: Bridging the Divide*, 2022.

²⁶⁷ International Rescue Committee, *Democratic Republic of Congo*, 2022.

²⁶⁸ UN ECOSOC and General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*, 2021, p. 4.

²⁶⁹ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

²⁷⁰ UN Climate Change, *Climate Change is an Increasing Threat to Africa*, 2020.

²⁷¹ Oxfam, *Climate Change and Inequality*, 2022.

²⁷² UN ECOSOC and General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*, 2021, p. 2.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

²⁷⁶ UN ECOSOC and UNDESA, *Policy Integration and the 2030 Agenda: Policy Tools and Approaches to Tackle Inequality*, 2016, p. 2.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁷⁸ UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding greater solidarity*, 2022, p. 48.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 49.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

Climate-related disasters and events doubled since 2012 compared with the 1980s.²⁸³ The ICRC has been advocating for capacity building in areas affected by climate change, especially those areas which are emerged in conflict.²⁸⁴ Refugees International works with refugees fleeing their homes due to climate-related events, which is not covered under the 1951 *Convention related to the Status of Refugees*.²⁸⁵

According to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), inhabitants of developing island states in the Pacific Ocean are at a greater risk of being displaced by natural and man-made disasters.²⁸⁶ As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), the Republic of Vanuatu has been affected heavily by climate change, which has led to its dependence on the country's humanitarian needs.²⁸⁷ In 2015, Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu, which affected 64% of the economy and 60% of the population, and in addition to this, the cyclone also destroyed 96% of the crops on the island.²⁸⁸ In severely affected areas, more than 50% of houses and buildings were destroyed or damaged, with families living in evacuation centers or temporary housing.²⁸⁹ The IDMC estimates that in 2020, disasters resulted in 80,000 new displacements.²⁹⁰ As of December 2020, a total of 63,965 IDPs were living in the Republic of Vanuatu.²⁹¹

Conclusion

Both humanitarian crises and climate change have put immense strains on nations and populations unprepared for the challenges that can emerge from these situations, which is largely due to economic inequalities and the gaps between developed and developing nations.²⁹² For example, the average income of people living in North America is 16 times higher than of people in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁹³ This year, an estimated 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection through the UN; this is compared with the 235 million who needed aid in 2021.²⁹⁴ In 2020, a total of \$19.11 billion USD was raised from donors to fund humanitarian actions, yet that was only 50% of what was needed to make an impact in all areas the UN wanted to address.²⁹⁵ In 2021, the UN's humanitarian partners requested \$35 billion in resources to aid 160 million of the 235 million people in need of aid.²⁹⁶ All inequalities, including economic ones, impact human dignity and require a breadth of resources to address.²⁹⁷

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: What are the risks of pooled funding initiatives? How can they be reinforced and made so they are consistently funded? How can ECOSOC and its partners work with NGOs to predict funding gaps and potential needs for aid? In what ways can the UN amend conventions and charters to guarantee more rights to refugees and IDPs suffering from climate-related emergencies?

Annotated Bibliography

²⁸³ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

²⁸⁴ ICRC, *Climate Change and Conflict*, 2022.

²⁸⁵ IDMC, *Climate Displacement Program*.

²⁸⁶ IDMC, *Pacific Response to Disaster Displacement Project*.

²⁸⁷ The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Vanuatu to the United Nations, *Climate Change*.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ World Food Programme, *Vanuatu: The Impact of Cyclone Pam*, 2015.

²⁹⁰ IDMC, *Vanuatu*, 2022.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² UNDP, *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding greater solidarity*, 2022, p. 5.

²⁹³ UN Department of Communications, *Inequality: Bridging the Divide*, 2022.

²⁹⁴ UN OCHA, *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 2022.

²⁹⁵ UN ECOSOC and General Assembly, *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*, 2021, p. 3.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

Central Emergency Response Fund. (2020). *OCHA-managed Pooled Funds*. Retrieved 5 February 2022 from: https://cerf.un.org/sites/default/files/resources/OCHA-managed%20Pooled%20Funds_2020%20Overview.pdf

This source highlights the work of CERF in managing OCHA's humanitarian funding. It explains the concept of pooled funds, but also how they can be applied in different Member States following unexpected or worsening humanitarian crises. Delegates will be able to see how funding is sourced through the United Nations and how important outside funding is to humanitarian operations.

Goodwin-Gill, Guy S, and Jane McAdam. (2017). *UNHCR: Climate Change, Disasters, and Displacement*. Retrieved 13 February 2022 from: <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/environment/596f25467/unhcr-climate-change-disasters-displacement.html?query=climate%20change>

This report gives an overview of the UNHCR's work in responding to refugees fleeing climate-related crises. It shows what ECOSOC partners like UNHCR are doing in response to issues relating to the Sustainable Development Goals. The report also talks about gaps in funding and attention to the various climate events that are happening globally, such as floods and droughts. Delegates will find this useful as a reference tool to use when beginning their research on the sub-topics.

United Nations-Coordinated Support to People Affected by Disaster and Conflict. (2022). *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022*. Retrieved 6 February 2022 from: <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global%20Humanitarian%20Overview%202022.pdf>

The Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 was published with data supplied from 2021 statistics related to humanitarian affairs. Besides touching on funding expenses related to OCHA's work, it also looks at global trends that concern the subtopics of this topic: humanitarian responses to conflict and climate change. Delegates will find this useful as a jumping off point in their research to better understand the topics being discussed.

United Nations, General Assembly and the United Nations Economic and Social Council. (2021). *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*. Retrieved 16 March 2022 from: <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/SG%20Report%20-%20Advance%20Unedited%20Version.pdf>

This report provides an overview of all the crises and situations that the United Nation is responding to globally. In addition to touching on the issue areas discussed in the subtopics it also can direct delegates to areas they wish to approach when discussing this topic and how it relates to the Member State. Delegates will find this useful also for the context in which to address future humanitarian crises following the COVID-19 pandemic.

United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (2022). *Global Humanitarian Overview*. Retrieved 18 March 2022 from: <https://gho.unocha.org/>

This report focuses the efforts of OCHA for the year 2022. In addition to providing statistics on refugees and internally displaced persons, it also highlights the issues of climate related IDPs and refugees and IDPs affected by armed conflict. It gives both a monetary overview of the UN's work but also gives the reader a strong understanding of the scope of the UN and its agencies. Delegates will find this report useful as it addresses both sub-topics and provides an overview of the financial situation facing those in need this year.

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