



United Nations Development Programme Background Guide 2025

Written by McKenzie Kelly and Aidan Lapp



NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025 National Model United Nations Conference in Banff, Canada (NMUN • Canada)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This year's staff members are Director McKenzie Kelly and Assistant Director Aidan Lapp. McKenzie Kelly holds Master's Degrees in Social Science and Globalization and Education Leadership from California State University, San Bernardino. She currently works as an Assistant Principal in Southern California. Aidan Lapp is in his fourth year of MacEwan University's Bachelor of Arts program, majoring in Political Science and minoring in French. He is working towards a career in international security, focusing on transnational crime and peacebuilding.

The topics under discussion for UNDP are:

1. Addressing Affordability and Accessibility of Goods for Marginalized Communities
2. Adaptation and Resilience in the Face of Climate Change

The United Nations Development Programme is dedicated to ending poverty, promoting democratic governance, and strengthening resilience to climate change and disasters. Operating across these three key areas UNDP provides comprehensive support to countries worldwide. Its approach focuses on building policies, leadership skills, and institutional capacities that enable nations to achieve their development goals. UNDP's approach is also grounded in the goal of sustainable development that leaves no one behind. UNDP's efforts have led to significant progress in eliminating harmful substances and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while advancing sustainable development and promoting equitable policies multilaterally. With a global presence, UNDP remains a vital force in addressing the world's most pressing development challenges.

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 Deputy Secretary-General Ana Williamson at dsg.canada@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,
McKenzie Kelly, Director
Aidan Lapp, Assistant Director

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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

As the lead United Nations agency on international development, UNDP’s core mandate is to “end poverty, build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions.”³ As articulated in its *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* (2021), UNDP structures its work through a “3 x 6 x 3” framework, comprising three directions of change, six signature solutions it can provide to partners, and three enablers to allow these solutions to be effective.⁴ The directions of change, which are (1) structural transformation, (2) leaving no one behind, and (3) resilience, serve as areas of focus for UNDP to support Member States towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.⁵ Its signature solutions are poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.⁶ These signature solutions are predicated on and can be scaled up by three enablers, which are development financing, strategic innovation, and digitalization.⁷

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; 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;

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. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2022*. 2023. p. 7.

⁵ 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. p. 7.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2022*. 2023. p. 7.

⁷ Ibid.

make recommendations to and coordinate with Member States, regional bodies, and other international actors on the achievement of the SDGs.⁸

- **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 Assembly and Economic and Social Council; work on areas not covered by its *Strategic Plan 2022-2025*.⁹

Governance, Funding, and Structure

UNDP reports annually to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).¹⁰ Its leadership consists of an Administrator and an Executive Board.¹¹ 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.¹² 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.¹³

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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ Member States of the Executive Board are elected by ECOSOC each year for three-year terms.¹⁶ Only the group of Western European and other States decides on its rotation internally.¹⁷ The Executive Board holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.¹⁸ UNDP shares its Executive Board with the United Nations Populations Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).¹⁹

⁸ Ibid.; 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.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2024.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United Nations Development Programme. *Leadership*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *2024 Organizational Chart*. 2024.

¹³ United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *Who We Are*. 2024.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Members of the Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Reports on Sessions*. 2024.

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

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.²⁰ UNDP also administers and utilizes the United Nations Volunteers program and the United Nations Capital Development Fund to support its work for sustainable development.²¹ Similarly, UNDP works with prominent individuals as Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates to raise awareness on important global development issues.²²

To achieve its mandate, UNDP relies entirely on voluntary contributions from Member States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other sources.²³ 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.²⁴ In 2023, the total annual contributions to UNDP increased slightly by 1% to \$5 billion from \$4.9 billion the year before.²⁵ Roughly three quarters of its financial resources come from donor countries and multilateral institutions.²⁶

²⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

²¹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2024-2025*. 2024. p. 8.

²² United Nations Development Programme. *Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates*. 2024.

²³ United Nations Development Programme. *Funding*. 2024.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Funding Compendium 2023*. 2024. p. 5.

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 11.

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1. Addressing Affordability and Accessibility of Goods for Marginalized Communities

Introduction

Recent shocks and crises, such as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, have proliferated a global affordability crisis.²⁷ Shocks are generally understood as unexpected or unpredictable events that deeply disrupt the economic and social integrity of a state, region, or community, but that are nonetheless out of their control.²⁸ When an accumulation of shocks exceeds a community or system's capacity to manage the built-up institutional and human strain, it becomes a crisis.²⁹ These shocks have resulted in stagnating economic growth and a steady increase in the cost of goods and services, which could push up to 1 billion people into extreme poverty by 2030, including roughly 71 million people who were not previously at risk.³⁰ Crises have also become increasingly complex and interconnected; armed conflicts, economic instability, rapid urban expansion, and environmental factors compound and worsen one another.³¹ These challenges disproportionately threaten marginalized communities, trapping them in cycles of vulnerability and perpetual economic strain.³²

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) notes that marginalization is highly context-dependent, characterized heavily by social norms and power relations in a given society or community.³³ Still, the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights cites "persons with disabilities, youth, women, LGBTQI+ people, members of minority groups, Indigenous people, internally displaced persons, and non-nationals, including refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers" as some of the most commonly marginalized groups.³⁴ Many such groups are also denied economic opportunities, human security, and quality public services due to their geographical location, which the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) terms "socio-spatial exclusion."³⁵ Marginalized groups are furthermore often disproportionately part of the informal sector.³⁶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the informal sector as all economic activities that are not covered or insufficiently covered by regulations,

²⁷ United Nations Development Programme, High Level Political Forum. *Addressing the cost-of-living crisis in developing countries: Poverty and vulnerability projections and policy responses*. 2022; United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy, and Finance. *Global impact of the war in Ukraine: Billions of people face the greatest cost-of-living crisis in a generation*. 2022.

²⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Exogenous Shocks*. N.d.

²⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2024: Social Development in Times of Converging Crises: A Call for Global Action*. 2024. p. 31.

³⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021. p. 4; United Nations Development Programme, High Level Political Forum. *Addressing the cost-of-living crisis in developing countries: Poverty and vulnerability projections and policy responses*. 2022; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *UN urges action to tackle persistent housing affordability crisis in Europe*. 2024.

³¹ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021. p. 3.

³² Ibid. p. 3.

³³ United Nations, Independent Evaluations Office. United Nations Development Programme. *Lessons from Evaluations: UNDP Support to Empowering Marginalized Groups*. 2020. p. 1.

³⁴ United Nations, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Marginalized groups: UN human rights expert calls for an end to relegation*. 2014.

³⁵ United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Habitat III Issue Paper 22 - Informal Settlements*. 2015. p. 2; United Nations Development Programme. *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion paper and Framework for Implementation*. 2018. p. 12.

³⁶ United Nations Economist Network. *Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. p. 1.

laws, and formal institutions.³⁷ Without government regulation or the capacity to enforce it, workers from marginalized communities often face violations of their rights via denial of safe work, sufficient pay, social protections, or employment altogether.³⁸ Marginalization is, therefore, intersectional – groups of people may become vulnerable due to any combination of endogenous or exogenous factors.³⁹ UNDP uses a typology of five intersecting factors which most commonly marginalize individuals and groups: discrimination, geographical location, socio-economic status, shocks and fragility, and governance.⁴⁰ UNDP assesses the impacts of these dynamics on marginalized communities' ability to afford goods and services by analyzing poverty multidimensionally.⁴¹

No matter the causes of a community's marginalization, it is likely to bear the brunt of the rising costs in goods and services.⁴² *Goods* can be understood as physical, tangible objects with identifiable ownership, and which can be bought and sold, while *services* constitute an action or process over which ownership is challenging or impossible to determine – a doctor performing a surgery, for example.⁴³ Goods and services can be joined under the umbrella term of “products.”⁴⁴ A product is generally understood to be unaffordable if its cost would compromise one's enjoyment of their fundamental human rights as set out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).⁴⁵ For instance, UN-Habitat states that affordable and accessible housing cannot deny an occupant access to essential products or services, including food, water, healthcare, transportation, and education.⁴⁶ Such needs may also be prerequisites to the enjoyment of others; the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs notes that vulnerable groups are marginalized further when denied access to material resources, including income, employment, land, and housing.”⁴⁷

International and Regional Framework

Article 25(1) of the UDHR states that all people are entitled to a standard of living that ensures their health and well-being, including the right to housing, food, medical and social care.⁴⁸ The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966) recognizes the universal right of everyone to “just and favourable conditions of work,” which provide sufficient pay for one to make a decent living.⁴⁹

³⁷ International Labour Organization. *Informal economy*. N.d.

³⁸ United Nations Economist Network. *Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. p. 1.

³⁹ Nedera, Setliana. United Nations Development Programme. *What is intersectionality? And why is it important for gender equality?*. 2023.

⁴⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion paper and Framework for Implementation*. 2018. p. 10.

⁴¹ United Nations Development Programme. *2024 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): Poverty amid conflict*. 2024.

⁴² United Nations, General Assembly. *Entrepreneurship for sustainable development (A/RES/79/201 (2024))*. 2024. pp. 2-3.

⁴³ United Nations, System of National Accounts. United Nations Statistics Division. *Glossary of Terms: Goods*. 1993.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 (III) (1948))*. 1948; United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Addressing the Housing Affordability Challenge: A Shared Responsibility*. 2020.

⁴⁶ United Nations, Human Settlements Programme. *Addressing the Housing Affordability Challenge: A Shared Responsibility*. 2020.

⁴⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Report on the World Social Situation 2016*. 2016. p. 18.

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

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

Several other conventions, such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (1979) and the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990), have reaffirmed these principles for their respective marginalized groups.⁵⁰ The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (2007) continued this trend, with Article 21 notably guaranteeing Indigenous peoples' right to improve their economic and social conditions, emphasizing the codependency of the two.⁵¹ The challenges of recent years prompted the General Assembly to adopt resolution 79/1 (2024), the *Pact for the Future*, which is the international community's most current commitment to ensuring access to decent livelihoods, energy, water, food, and sustainable infrastructure for the world's most marginalized communities.⁵²

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) and the majority of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have provided the groundwork for addressing the myriad intersecting factors affecting vulnerable groups' marginalization and ability to access and afford products.⁵³ Nonetheless, UNDP has primarily approached the issue through its work towards SDG 1: No Poverty and SDG 10: Reduce Inequalities.⁵⁴ The former guides international efforts to eradicate extreme poverty, and to ensure the most vulnerable have access to economic resources, property and basic services.⁵⁵ The latter directs UNDP's ambitions toward improving marginalized communities' access to social protections, quality work, and good wages, while eliminating discriminatory laws and policies.⁵⁶

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) revised the *United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection* (UNGCP) (1999) in 2016, and, while not legally binding, serves as the sole universally recognized set of principles on consumer protection.⁵⁷ The UNGCP delineates several "Legitimate Needs," particularly stating that all consumers must be able to access essential goods and services, with particular protection given to those in vulnerable situations.⁵⁸ Article IV calls for the fair and equitable treatment of all consumers, especially those most marginalized, while Article VI urges international cooperation to support markets that prioritize both the affordability and quality of goods.⁵⁹ The UNGCP also calls upon Member States to ensure universal access to public services, particularly for marginalized communities, whether urban or rural.⁶⁰

⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (A/RES/34/180) (1979). 1979; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (A/RES/45/158 (1990)). 1990.

⁵¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (A/RES/61/295 (2007)). 2007. p. 17.

⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *Pact for the Future, Declaration on Future Generations, Global Digital Compact* (A/RES/79/1) (2024)). 2024. pp. 7, 24.

⁵³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1 * (2015)). 2015; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.

⁵⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025* (DP/2021/28 (2021)). 2021. p. 7; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *SDG 1: Targets and Indicators*. N.d; United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *SDG 10: Targets and Indicators*. N.d.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Access by Consumers to Essential Services: Energy, Water and Sanitation*. 2022. p. 1.

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 13.

⁵⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection* (UNCTAD/DITC/CPLP/MISC/2016/1 (2016)). 2016. pp. 9, 25.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 24.

UNDP has worked to improve its strategies for supporting marginalized communities.⁶¹ UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) found that UNDP was most effective in empowering marginalized groups when it could identify who they were and how they were being marginalized.⁶² IEO also reported that UNDP found success when efforts were locally-focused and informed by substantial engagement with marginalized groups.⁶³ In line with the 2030 Agenda and these recommendations, UNDP developed the *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* (Strategic Plan) (2021), which serves as the organization's key operational framework.⁶⁴ Poverty eradication remains at the heart of UNDP's work, and the organization remains committed to working with Member States to achieve sustainable development in line with domestic programs and policies.⁶⁵ To this end, the Strategic Plan sets three core strategic directions for UNDP: Structural Transformations (including green, inclusive and digital transitions), Leaving No One Behind, and Building Resilience.⁶⁶ Structural Transformation speaks to UNDP's aim of removing the systemic barriers to marginalized groups' full economic and social prosperity, as well as context-sensitive transitions to green and inclusive economies.⁶⁷ Leaving No One Behind emphasizes that "poverty and inequality are multidimensional," mainstreaming the principles of intersectionality into all of UNDP's projects.⁶⁸ Finally, Building Resilience is a strategic response to the disproportionate impact of contemporary crises and shocks on marginalized groups, with a focus on understanding how such crises affect the most vulnerable in the short term in order to improve capacity and self-determination in the long-term.⁶⁹

The General Assembly has also adopted several resolutions addressing accessibility and affordability; resolution 79/201 (2024) on "Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development" recognizes the detrimental effect recent crises have had on the world's most marginalized.⁷⁰ Specifically, it calls for the promotion of entrepreneurship as a tool to foster quality jobs among the most vulnerable, regardless of economic sector.⁷¹ It recommends Member States develop policy that removes barriers to economic engagement and promotes education in science, technology, and financial literacy.⁷² General Assembly resolution 79/211 (2024) on "Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All" urges Member States to prioritize communities facing the greatest risk of being left behind, and recommends promoting cost-competitiveness and infrastructure investment for off-grid communities to reduce costs and create opportunities for decent work.⁷³ General Assembly resolution 79/227 (2024) concerning "Agriculture Development, Food Security and Nutrition" emphasizes resilience building among

⁶¹ United Nations, Independent Evaluations Office. United Nations Development Programme. *Lessons from Evaluations: UNDP Support to Empowering Marginalized Groups*. 2020; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021.

⁶² United Nations, Independent Evaluations Office. United Nations Development Programme. *Lessons from Evaluations: UNDP Support to Empowering Marginalized Groups*. 2020. pp. 2-3.

⁶³ Ibid. pp. 2-3.

⁶⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021.

⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 7.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 2021. p. 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 2021. p. 7.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 2021. p. 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid. 2021. p. 10.

⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Entrepreneurship for sustainable development (A/RES/79/201 (2024))*. 2024. pp. 2-3.

⁷¹ Ibid. pp. 2-3, 6.

⁷² Ibid. pp. 2-3, 6.

⁷³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/RES/79/211 (2024))*. 2024. pp. 7, 9, 11.

marginalized communities against economic downturns and environmental deterioration.⁷⁴ It also calls for a two-track approach, recommending immediate short-term food assistance to the most vulnerable, complemented by medium- and long-term investments in market integration and capacity building.⁷⁵

Role of the International System

In order to promote effective strategies for supporting vulnerable groups, UNDP and fellow stakeholders require reliable data; however, the myriad barriers to accessing goods and services that marginalized groups face are often unmeasured, limiting the efficacy of international efforts.⁷⁶ The Human Development Reports Office, a subsidiary of UNDP, also oversees the Human Development Index (HDI), analyzing trends within their annual Human Development Reports.⁷⁷ The HDI is measured along three metrics: first, “a long and healthy life,” assessed by life expectancy at birth; second, “being knowledgeable,” determined by the average number of years of schooling adults aged 25 years and more have received; finally, “having a decent standard of living,” measured by gross national income per capita.⁷⁸ These metrics provide a valuable snapshot of global trends, but do not paint a full picture of inequalities within Member States.⁷⁹ One of UNDP’s methods to fill this gap in assessment has been to utilize the United Nations Common Country Analysis (CCAs).⁸⁰ These reports, prepared by the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) for the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, inform UNDP by assessing the specific challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda Member States face.⁸¹ CCAs involve a marginalized stakeholder analysis, enhancing UNDP’s ability to address the economic challenges of these groups.⁸²

UNDP also began complementing its Human Development Reports with the annual Multidimensional Poverty Index.⁸³ In 2024, UNDP partnered with the Uppsala Conflict Data Program to better assess the effects of conflict on the wealth of marginalized groups.⁸⁴ Most recently, the General Assembly adopted resolution 78/322 (2024), establishing a “Multidimensional Vulnerability Index” (MVI).⁸⁵ While stewardship of this project is yet undecided, UNDP worked with UNCTAD and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States to develop models for the MVI.⁸⁶ However, at this time, this instrument is only

⁷⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Agriculture development, food security and nutrition (A/RES/79/227 (2024))*. 2024. pp. 14, 16-17.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 18.

⁷⁶ United Nations, Human Development Reports Office. United Nations Development Programme. *World’s most marginalized still left behind by global development priorities: UNDP report*. 2017.

⁷⁷ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports Office. *Human Development Index (HDI)*. N.d.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Reports Office. *What is Human Development?*. N.d.

⁸⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Common Country Analysis: Companion Piece to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance*. N.d. p. 1.

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 1.

⁸² Ibid. p. 4.

⁸³ United Nations Development Programme. *2024 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI): Poverty amid conflict*. 2024.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Multidimensional vulnerability index (A/RES/78/322 (2024))*. 2024.

⁸⁶ United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States. *Multidimensional Vulnerability Index: Potential Development and Uses*. 2021. pp. 23-25.

set to provide such documentation at the Member State-level, limiting the expected insights into community-level vulnerabilities.⁸⁷

As steward to the UNGCP, UNCTAD is another key partner while addressing the cost of living crisis.⁸⁸ In 2021, UNDP partnered with UNCTAD and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) on the Pacific Digital Economy Programme (PDEP), a joint programme to improve digital infrastructure and literacy to vulnerable populations of Pacific Islanders.⁸⁹ This work combined insights from the UNCT and the CCAs, while assessing regional vulnerabilities to aid in formulating a regional capacity-building strategy.⁹⁰ In 2025, PDEP partners provided a roadmap for enhancing the legal framework for digital protection among marginalized groups, ensuring safe and continued access to digital economic opportunities.⁹¹ UNDP, UNCTAD, and UNCDF began another joint project with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in 2024, promoting knowledge-sharing and the formation of value chains to support economic resilience among Small and Medium Enterprises post-COVID.⁹²

Marginalized persons who are employed within the informal sector may face additional barriers toward social mobility, such as the inability to build credit.⁹³ This is often compounded by the informal sector's reliance on a cash economy, leaving groups further disconnected to financial institutions.⁹⁴ This has prompted UNDP to pursue partnerships with the UNCDF and the ILO, prioritizing decent jobs overall, with a focus on green transitions, youth employment and social entrepreneurship in the informal sector.⁹⁵ The ILO often works to promote the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) among marginalized groups.⁹⁶ The SSE encompasses enterprises, non-profit groups, community organizations, and other collectives who engage in activities typically handled by the private sector, but which prioritize people, social considerations, and the general good of the community over capital gain.⁹⁷ This has been shown to mitigate the elements of social exclusion that can deny marginalized communities access to essential products.⁹⁸ It has also been successful in lowering the costs of collective goods and services, such as health services and education, particularly in rural contexts.⁹⁹ In a note to the General Assembly, Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized the value of the SSE's focus on "the access to and the affordability of goods and services."¹⁰⁰ The General Assembly has directly acknowledged the value of the

⁸⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Multidimensional vulnerability index (A/RES/78/322 (2024))*. 2024. p. 3.

⁸⁸ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNCTAD/DITC/CPLP/MISC/2016/1 (2016))*. 2016.

⁸⁹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *UN agencies join forces to support inclusive digital economies in the Pacific*. 2021.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Pacific cyberlaw gaps exposed in major UNCTAD study*. 2025.

⁹² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Enhancing the capacity of African vulnerable countries in adopting policy incentives and innovative instruments for SMEs' participation in regional value chains*. 2024.

⁹³ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021. p. 8.

⁹⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Making Markets Work for the SDGs: UNDP's Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2023-2025)*. 2024. p. 3.

⁹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021. p. 8.

⁹⁶ International Labour Organization. *Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy (ILC.110/Resolution II (2022))*. 2022. p. 2.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 2.

⁹⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Global Action Promoting Social & Solidarity Economy Ecosystems. *What is the social and solidarity economy? A review of concepts*. 2023. p. 26.

⁹⁹ Ibid. pp. 26, 29.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development: Note by the Secretary-General (A/79/351 (2024))*. 2024. p. 4.

SSE within resolution 79/213 (2024) on “Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development,” recognizing that it supports decent work and remuneration for marginalized groups.¹⁰¹ It also called upon all UN bodies involved in development to adopt the principles of the SSE into their respective projects, where applicable.¹⁰²

Accessibility of Goods and Services for Informal Settlements

Marginalized communities may be denied access to goods and services not only due to who they are (race, gender, among other identities), but also where they are (rural communities, communities with poor infrastructure, etcetera).¹⁰³ Informal settlements are another example of the latter, and residents often face marginalization in the form of socio-spatial exclusion.¹⁰⁴ Currently, 55% of the global population resides in cities, with a projected increase to 70% by 2050; however, 31.2% of this urban population lives in slums or informal settlements.¹⁰⁵ UN-Habitat identifies informal settlements based on three criteria: first, inhabitants lack security of tenure, whether over their dwellings, land, or both; second, structures fail to comply with building codes and regulations; third, communities are disconnected from basic public services and infrastructure.¹⁰⁶

UNDP emphasizes that disconnection from public services and infrastructure consequently limits informal settlements’ access to formal markets and global supply chains.¹⁰⁷ This is often caused by prevalent digital divides, a lack of appropriate market apparatuses, disorganized distribution mechanisms, and insufficient transportation and delivery infrastructure, all of which may lead to residents paying comparatively more for essential services – the so-called “poverty penalty.”¹⁰⁸ In Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, UNDP found that private vendors capitalized on informal settlements’ disconnection from the public water utility, creating a highly fragmented informal supply chain that raised costs for the most marginalized at every turn.¹⁰⁹ Insecurity of tenure can also pose significant legal barriers to receiving formal employment or accessing social services.¹¹⁰ Addressing access and affordability of products in informal settlements is an indispensable step to achieving SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities;

¹⁰¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development (A/RES/79/213 (2024))*. 2024. p. 3-4.

¹⁰² Ibid. p. 3-4.

¹⁰³ United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Habitat III Issue Paper 22 - Informal Settlements*. 2015. p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion paper and Framework for Implementation*. 2018. p. 12.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division. *SDG 11*. 2023; United Nations Human Settlements Programme, Urban Indicators Database. *Housing, slums and informal settlements: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (percent)*. 2024.

¹⁰⁶ United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Habitat III Issue Paper 22 - Informal Settlements*. 2015. p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Making Markets Work for the SDGs: UNDP’s Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2023-2025)*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Making Markets Work for the SDGs: UNDP’s Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2023-2025)*. 2024. p. 3; United Nations Development Programme. *Making Markets Work for the SDGs: UNDP’s Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2023-2025)*. 2024. p. 2; United Nations Development Programme. *Creating Value for All: Strategies for Doing Business With the Poor*. 2008. p. 16; United Nations Development Programme. *Services and Supply Chains: The Role of the Domestic Private Sector in Water Service Delivery in Tanzania*. 2013; Bett, Edwin. *Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. Why African Craft Makers Should Understand Supply Chains Better*. 2024.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Services and Supply Chains: The Role of the Domestic Private Sector in Water Service Delivery in Tanzania*. 2013. pp. 2, 11.

¹¹⁰ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Land Tenure and Security*. N.d.

Target 11.1 urges the international community to “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services,” and to work collectively to upgrade slums.”¹¹¹

In line with the Strategic Plan, UNDP often works to reduce the barriers of informality by assisting governments in the creation of regulations, labour standards, and tax systems while strengthening property rights and legal systems, bridging the gap between tenure and economic inclusion.¹¹² UNDP has more recently begun joining local actors to provide development advice.¹¹³ In May 2025, for example, UNDP partnered with Liberia’s National Housing Authority to conduct assessments of their informal settlements in order to provide “data-driven, community-informed, and sustainable” policy recommendations.¹¹⁴ UNDP also frequently assists local governments in improving resilience against climate disasters.¹¹⁵ Strategic Priority 3 of their *Urban Risk Management and Resilience Strategy* (2021) is to “target the needs of marginalized communities for more equitable urban resilience.”¹¹⁶ UNDP does this by engaging with marginalized groups at the local level, working to remedy everyday socio-economic crises in the short term, such as affordability, in order to mitigate the risks of larger crises in the medium- and long-term.¹¹⁷ In 2023, UNDP was joined by UN-Habitat and the Food and Agriculture Organization in leading the High Impact Initiative on SDG Localization.¹¹⁸ This forum saw stakeholders join to devise new approaches to assisting marginalized urban populations by improving “food systems, energy access and affordability, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection.”¹¹⁹ They specifically urged Member States to pursue enhancements to stakeholder engagement at the local level, particularly among marginalized communities, and to support these groups in at-scale SDG projects.¹²⁰

Enhancing Marginalized Communities’ Resilience to Shocks and Crises

Shocks and fragility are another element of UNDP’s framework of marginalizing factors.¹²¹ Shocks, much like sustainable development, are multifaceted and influenced by “multiple, intersecting, exogenous and endogenous factors.”¹²² Furthermore, in an increasingly globalized world, shocks ripple across interconnected systems with unprecedented speed and intensity.¹²³ SDG 1’s Target 1.5 recognizes the disproportionate effect shocks have on marginalized communities, and aims to improve their resilience to

¹¹¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Creating Value for All: Strategies for Doing Business With the Poor*. 2008. p. 16.

¹¹² United Nations Development Programme. *Making Markets Work for the SDGs: UNDP’s Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2023-2025)*. 2024. p. 20

¹¹³ United Nations Development Programme. *National Housing Authority Leads UNDP on an Urban Upgrading Mission*. 2025.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *How UNDP is Strengthening Cities’ Resilience through Risk-Informed Urban Development*. 2024.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Urban Risk Management and Resilience Strategy*. 2021. pp. 29-30.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 29-30.

¹¹⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *UN System SDG Implementation: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)*. 2023.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Inter-Agency Policy Brief: Accelerating SDG Localization to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2024. p. 8

¹²¹ United Nations Development Programme. *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion paper and Framework for Implementation*. 2018. p. 10.

¹²² United Nations, General Assembly. *Multidimensional vulnerability index (A/RES/78/322 (2024))*. 2024. p. 1.

¹²³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2024: Social Development in Times of Converging Crises: A Call for Global Action*. 2024. p. 19.

economic, social, and environmental disasters.¹²⁴ UNDP broadly categorizes shocks as stemming from conflicts, population displacements and large movements of migrants, climate change, or health disasters.¹²⁵

UNDP regularly works to address the economic impacts of shock, crises, and fragility on marginalized communities.¹²⁶ Shocks of any nature may lead to immediate disruptions of supply chains, delivery systems, and livelihoods, and can exacerbate social divisions affecting marginalized groups' access to decent work and essential products.¹²⁷ UNDP's "Crisis Offer" provides the core framework for building resilience among vulnerable communities; overall, over half of UNDP's annual budget is directed to projects in crisis contexts, with a focus on community-level development projects and economic revitalization.¹²⁸ Their tripartite approach consists of assisting populations through crises, establishing the necessary mechanisms to anticipate crises, and to maintain lives and livelihoods during crises.¹²⁹ UNDP works specifically to maintain delivery systems for basic services in order to ensure affected communities' access both during and after shocks and crises.¹³⁰ UNDP also strives to maintain and rebuild markets, supporting job creation, infrastructure development, and access to inclusive local economies.¹³¹

In some cases, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP works to directly support marginalized groups' access to goods and services.¹³² In Myanmar, for example, UNDP joined the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to provide immediate relief in the form of food, water, and clothing.¹³³ At the same time, international interventions to mitigate the effects of shocks and crises require effective design and delivery to avoid them becoming shocks themselves.¹³⁴ The *Food Assistance Convention* (2012) specifically mandates that interventions must avoid negatively affecting "local production, market conditions, marketing structures and commercial trade or the price of essential goods for vulnerable populations."¹³⁵ In April 2025, Denmark and the World Food Programme launched a school meal program across Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda.¹³⁶ Rather than importing goods, the project sources all food from local farmers while bridging the logistical gap, maintaining local markets and providing "not only essential nutrition but also long-term economic and environmental benefits."¹³⁷ UNDP's Crisis Offer maintains this strategy, working to ensure marginalized communities' long-term ability to access and afford goods and services in order to "build hope beyond handouts."¹³⁸

¹²⁴ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *SDG 1: Targets and Indicators*. N.d.

¹²⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion paper and Framework for Implementation*. 2018. p. 17.

¹²⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Crisis Offer: A Framework for Development Solutions to Crisis and Fragility*. 2022. p. 3

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 3

¹²⁸ Ibid. pp. 3, 5.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 4.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p. 3.

¹³¹ Ibid. p. 15.

¹³² United Nations Development Programme, Myanmar Development Observatory. *Helping communities weather the socio-economic downturn: Building Urban Resilience*. 2022. p. 17.

¹³³ Ibid. p. 17.

¹³⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2024: Social Development in Times of Converging Crises: A Call for Global Action*. 2024. p. 66.

¹³⁵ United Nations, Treaty Series. *Food Assistance Convention*. 2012. p. 5.

¹³⁶ World Food Programme. *Historic Danish public-private partnership with WFP expands home-grown school meals in East Africa*. 2025.

¹³⁷ Ibid. 2025.

¹³⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Crisis Offer: A Framework for Development Solutions to Crisis and Fragility*. 2022. p. 3.

Conclusion

Marginalized communities have borne the brunt of interconnected global crises.¹³⁹ Intersecting vulnerabilities have shaped multidimensional poverty, and the world's furthest behind struggle to access essential products, whether physically or fiscally.¹⁴⁰ The inability to access basic goods and services can lead to cascading compromises of the human rights of the world's most vulnerable.¹⁴¹ Recent frameworks have acknowledged that no one factor can be blamed for the impoverishment of marginalized groups, just like no one factor encompasses the scope of their marginalization.¹⁴² At the same time, approaching this challenge multidimensionally has revealed gaps in data that hinders the United Nations system's ability to provide informed policy advice.¹⁴³ Unaffordability can be the result of both rising prices and stagnating economic growth among marginalized communities, and holistic efforts are required to curb the effects of both.¹⁴⁴ If the international community is to regain momentum toward achieving the 2030 Agenda, the economic and social empowerment of marginalized communities is integral.¹⁴⁵

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can UNDP better identify the intersecting vulnerabilities marginalized communities face? How can UNDP work with Member States to address these complex vulnerabilities? In what ways can local and regional governments work with civil society? What can UNDP and its partners do to address gaps in data concerning marginalized communities, such as wages within the informal sector? How can mechanisms like the MVI be adapted to address community-level challenges? How can policy foster resilience and ensure the affordability of goods and services among marginalized communities across unprecedented shocks and crises? How can UNDP balance meeting marginalized communities where they are and promoting structural changes? Are policy frameworks falling short in a post-COVID world?

¹³⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Entrepreneurship for sustainable development (A/RES/79/201 (2024))*. 2024. pp. 2-3.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Report on the World Social Situation 2016*. 2016. p. 18.

¹⁴² United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021. p. 1; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP's Crisis Offer: A Framework for Development Solutions to Crisis and Fragility*. 2022; United Nations Development Programme. *What Does It Mean to Leave No One Behind? A UNDP Discussion paper and Framework for Implementation*. 2018.

¹⁴³ United Nations, Human Development Reports Office. United Nations Development Programme. *World's most marginalized still left behind by global development priorities: UNDP report*. 2017.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *UN urges action to tackle persistent housing affordability crisis in Europe*. 2024.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28 (2021))*. 2021.

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United Nations, Statistics Division, System of National Accounts. *Glossary of Terms: Services*. 1993. Retrieved 6 May 2025 from: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/nationalaccount/glossresults.asp?glD=501>

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2. Adaptation and Resilience in the Face of Climate Change

*"We cannot, must not, and will not let up on climate action."*¹⁴⁶

Introduction

As of 2024, approximately half the global population, 3.6 billion people, are considered highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and is the single biggest threat facing humanity.¹⁴⁷ The United Nations (UN) defines climate change as the long-term change in weather patterns and temperatures caused by human activity.¹⁴⁸ The impacts of climate change range from extreme weather events, disease, forced relocation, air pollution, and drought.¹⁴⁹ In order to address the growing effects of climate change and take action to prevent further damage, the global community pledged to adhere to the *Paris Agreement* at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015.¹⁵⁰ In practice, climate change adaptations are the actions that are taken to reduce the expected impacts of current ecological changes due to climate, including extreme weather conditions, loss of biodiversity, sea-level rise, and resource insecurity.¹⁵¹ While adaptation is the action taken, climate resilience is the ability of a community or group to anticipate and prepare for the impacts of climate change and begin the process of adapting their practices.¹⁵² One such practice used is the Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA).¹⁵³ EbA is defined as adaptations to combat climate change utilizing the natural environment and natural processes within the ecosystem.¹⁵⁴

As the halfway point in the timeline of the *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) has come to a close, metrics indicate that progress on the goals has not been consistent across the global community.¹⁵⁵ Climate finance has fallen short of the necessary funding, and Least Developed Countries will need \$6 trillion USD by 2030 to meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)s, or national pledges, essentially stunting the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and global temperature.¹⁵⁶ However, this is due to the fact that 65% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets are linked directly to local and regional planning and implementation.¹⁵⁷ The focus on implementing strategies for climate action needs to shift from uniform globalized procedures to planning and development at the local and regional government (LRG) level, anchoring the policies to inclusion and multi-level governance.¹⁵⁸ The strategy for the shift in

¹⁴⁶ Guterres, Antonio. *Secretary-General's Press Encounter on Climate*. 2025.

¹⁴⁷ UN Department of Global Communications. *Climate Action Fast Facts*. 2025.

¹⁴⁸ UN Department of Global Communications. *What Is Climate Change?*. 2025.

¹⁴⁹ UN Department of Global Communications. *Climate Action Fast Facts*. 2025.

¹⁵⁰ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Twenty-first session. *Paris Agreement*. 2015.

¹⁵¹ UN Development Programme. *The Climate Dictionary: An everyday guide to climate change*. 2023.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ UN Environment Programme. *A Decade of Ecosystem-based Adaptation*. 2024.

¹⁵⁴ Convention on Biological Diversity. *The Convention on Biological Diversity: A Year in Review 2010*. 2010. p.30.

¹⁵⁵ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, et al. *Inter-Agency Policy Brief: Accelerating SDG Localization to deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2024. p.11.

¹⁵⁶ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023: Special Edition*. 2023. p. 41.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁵⁸ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Inter-agency Policy Briefs on Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda from Local to Global Levels: The Critical Importance of SDG Localization*. 2024. p. 20.

global policy development to local policy development for accomplishing the SDGs is called SDG localization.¹⁵⁹

International and Regional Framework

Recognizing the impact of climate change on development following the end of the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development specifically created a goal for climate action.¹⁶⁰ SDG 13, Climate Action, called for communities to strengthen their response to climate change, including becoming more resilient to climate-related hazards and adapting to post natural disasters.¹⁶¹ The parameters of the goal are aligned with the *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015), most specifically priority 3 investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience.¹⁶² As of 2023, the number of Member States reporting the adoption and implementation of national disaster risk and reduction plans increased to 129 Member States, up from 55 countries in 2015.¹⁶³

The Paris Agreement pledged all countries to global climate adaptation and resilience by reducing emissions, supporting one another financially, and establishing parameters for success such as limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C and implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to finance adaptation projects and reduce climate impact.¹⁶⁴ While the agreement provides the guidelines for climate action, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) serves as the main platform for negotiating and directing the global response to climate change and is the foundational treaty behind the *Paris Agreement*.¹⁶⁵ Guided by the foundation for climate action outlined in the UNFCCC and the goals in the *Paris Agreement*, it is the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide and shape the response to climate change at the country level through concrete action.¹⁶⁶

In 2020, following the *Paris Agreement*, UNDP launched the Climate Promise Initiative.¹⁶⁷ This initiative was designed specifically to assist Member States in coordinating domestic response to the goals of the *Paris Agreement*.¹⁶⁸ The efforts of UNDP's Climate Promise Initiative are defined by five distinct pillars: adaptation, mitigation, carbon markets, forests, and policy.¹⁶⁹ Based on these pillars of work, UNDP supports the coordination of NDCs for national adaptation plans (NAPs), long-term development strategies (LT-LEDS), and development of green recovery plans.¹⁷⁰ UNDP manages the largest climate portfolio within the UN system, advancing climate action in over 140 countries through more than \$2

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ UN General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² UN General Assembly. *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. 2015.

¹⁶³ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 13 Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*. 2025.

¹⁶⁴ UN Department of Global Communications. *The Paris Agreement*. 2025.; Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Twenty-first session. *Paris Agreement*. 2015.

¹⁶⁵ UN Climate Change. *About the Secretariate*. 2025.

¹⁶⁶ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: What we do*. 2025.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise*. 2020. p.2.

¹⁶⁹ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: What we do*. 2025.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

billion USD in grant financing.¹⁷¹ Some leading examples of these plans in action are UNDP's Flagship Initiatives such as, the Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture (SCALA) Program, United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN-REDD), and Youth4Climate.¹⁷²

Role of the International System

UNDP has facilitated the creation of NAPs that were originally established by the *Paris Agreement* in 2015, and has continued to be responsible for updating the NAPs based on progress towards the goals set in the *Paris Agreement*.¹⁷³ With guidance from the UNFCCC, the goal of NAPs is to pursue climate action that reflects a country-driven approach that is based on the best available science while incorporating appropriate traditional and indigenous knowledge.¹⁷⁴ NAPs should also integrate adaptation into both economic and environmental policies and actions.¹⁷⁵ However, there have been significant barriers in implementing NAPs with fidelity, including lack of funding, inconsistent technical assistance, and implementation monitoring.¹⁷⁶ This particularly affects the progress of NAP implementation in developing countries, with the cost burden of paying for consultants and experts falling to the government.¹⁷⁷ These challenges were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷⁸ As of 2024, only 143 countries have initiated a domestic NAP, with only 60 having begun the process of submitting the plan to the UNFCCC.¹⁷⁹ UNDP is actively supporting another 50 developing countries in establishing the foundation for their NAP.¹⁸⁰

The main focus of UNFCCC is identifying the needs of individual Member States as opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach to climate action policy development.¹⁸¹ One key factor in addressing the goals of the UNFCCC is Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA).¹⁸² EbA utilizes the natural environment and naturally occurring processes in the geological landscape to provide sustainable climate solutions.¹⁸³ In response to Goal 13 (Climate Action) of the SDGs, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) created the EbA Strategy.¹⁸⁴ UNEP has highlighted as a priority the EbA to implement specific development strategies that are tailored to the needs of the specific region.¹⁸⁵ Recognizing the distinct ecosystems that contribute to the landscape of each Member State is vital when integrating EbA into countries' NAPs.¹⁸⁶

¹⁷¹ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: What we do*. 2025.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ UN Development Programme. *What are National Adaptation Plans and why do they matter?*. 2025.

¹⁷⁴ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Overview - National Adaptation Plans*. 2025.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Guerdat, Patrick, Masud, Shafaq, and Beauchamp, Emilie. International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Reporting on progress in National Adaptation Plan processes: An analysis (NAP Global Network report)*. 2023. p. 51.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 23.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 51.

¹⁷⁹ UN Development Programme. *What are National Adaptation Plans and why do they matter?*. 2025

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ UN Development Programme. *Ecosystem-Based Adaptation*. 2025.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ UN Environment Programme. *A Decade of Ecosystem-based Adaptation*. 2024.

¹⁸⁵ UN Environment Programme. *UNEP and EbA Briefing Note 7*. 2020.

¹⁸⁶ UN Development Programme. *Ecosystem-Based Adaptation*. 2025.

Incorporating EbA into NAPs and long-term development strategies allows climate action to span multiple sectors, contributing to food and water security as well as other critical societal needs.¹⁸⁷

In 2024, UNDP began phase three of the Climate Promise, which identified 15 key areas of work.¹⁸⁸ The areas of work included adaptation and resilience, forests and land, and urban issues.¹⁸⁹ The driving force for identifying these areas was to help address the need to create more flexible solutions unique to the individual Member State that would concurrently address other areas of sustainable development, including, sustainable cities, clean energy, zero hunger, and sustainable land use.¹⁹⁰ The goal of Climate Promise 2025 is to enhance NDCs to accelerate the implementation of climate action to combat increasing impacts of climate change such as extreme weather, agricultural decline, and economic pressures, while also working to create sustainable solutions that address the individual needs of Member States.¹⁹¹

To help support the initiatives established in NDCs and NAPs, the *Paris Agreement* also called for the establishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).¹⁹² GCF is the world's current largest fund to support climate action, which is mandated to specifically support developing countries to meet their NDCs.¹⁹³ The four areas that are given focus for financial support are the urban environment; sustainable energy and industry; livelihoods and wellbeing; and land-use, forests and ecosystems.¹⁹⁴ In order to meet the needs of developing countries in those four areas, GCF created Country Platforms for Climate Finance.¹⁹⁵ The purpose of the Country Platforms is to create a pathway for countries to mobilize partnerships for funding sources.¹⁹⁶ Country platforms adopt an inclusive, country-led approach that promotes national ownership and engages a wide range of stakeholders, including the private sector, subnational governments, investment agencies, and line ministries in the design and implementation of investment strategies.¹⁹⁷

Building upon both the successes and challenges of the SDGs and the *Paris Agreement*, the General Assembly adopted resolution 79/1, *Pact for the Future*, in 2024.¹⁹⁸ The goal of the resolution was to recommit to the sustainable development and climate goals by refocusing efforts through the lens of five specific areas; peace and security, financing for climate change initiatives, future generations, human rights and gender, and digital cooperation.¹⁹⁹ In order to proceed with the 52 proposed strategies outlined among the five areas, including the need to significantly increase financing for adaptation policies, the Secretary General requested a budget of \$8.2 million USD.²⁰⁰ In December of 2024, the General Assembly approved a total budget of \$2.9 million USD for the Pact, reflecting the recent difficulties in

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise 2025*. 2024.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ UN Development Programme. *UNDP Climate Promise in Europe and Central Asia*. 2024.

¹⁹² Green Climate Fund. *About GCF: Overview*. 2025.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Green Climate Fund. *Country Platforms for Climate Finance*. N.d. p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 2.

¹⁹⁸ UN General Assembly. *Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

²⁰⁰ UN General Assembly. *Pact for the Future (A/RES/79/1)*. 2024. p. 10; UN General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary General Revised estimates resulting from General Assembly Resolution 79/1, entitled "The Pact for the Future"*. 2024.

budgetary restrictions faced for climate action.²⁰¹ In 2024, the Secretary General released the Report of *the Secretary General Revised estimates resulting from General Assembly Resolution 79/1*, titled “*The Pact for the Future*” to justify the smaller approved budget of \$2.9 million USD for *The Pact*.²⁰² This highlighted the investment into partnerships between regional programs and local governments and the role of LRG to enact solutions for climate adaptation and resilience.²⁰³

Resilience for Food Security

One of UNDP’s main areas of work in the *Climate Promise* is “Fostering Resilience for Climate Change.”²⁰⁴ While droughts, floods, shifting rainfall patterns, and other extreme weather events threaten vulnerable communities, improved access to climate information, technology, and sustainable land and water management can enhance resilience and protect food security.²⁰⁵ The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) created the *FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031* (2021), which outlines sustainable consumption and production patterns to ensure long term resilience in the face of climate change to meet the Paris Climate goals.²⁰⁶ Improved access to Building resilience in agricultural systems serves two main goals: strengthening the resilience of food systems and the households that depend on them, which in turn requires improving and stabilizing the incomes of agricultural communities.²⁰⁷ In order to achieve both facets of resilience for food security, the following needs to be considered based on the environment, crop systems, livestock and pastoral systems, aquaculture systems, and forests.²⁰⁸ The framework also highlights the EbA landscape approach, which involves considering the area’s physical and biological characteristics alongside the institutions and communities that shape it, highlighting the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration to address environmental, social, and economic challenges in an integrated manner.²⁰⁹

An example of strengthening agricultural resilience at the country level is the Strengthening Agricultural Resilience through Transformational Livelihood Adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA) program, which stems from UNDP’s Climate Promise Initiative.²¹⁰ UNDP’s SARTLA project launched at the beginning of 2025, the goal of the project is to implement a systemic EbA approach to strengthen the resilience of communities and their food production systems, using nature-based solutions to address climate-related vulnerabilities in rural livelihoods.²¹¹ By 2030, SARTLA aims to enhance agro-ecological landscape management and promote the use of climate resilient food production technologies among smallholder farms, with progress towards these goals being reviewed yearly.²¹²

²⁰¹ UN General Assembly. *Report of the Secretary General Revised estimates resulting from General Assembly Resolution 79/1, entitled “The Pact for the Future”*. 2024. p. 7.

²⁰² Ibid. p. 10-12.

²⁰³ Ibid. p. 10-12.

²⁰⁴ UN Development Programme. *Climate Change Adaptation: Fostering Resilience for Food Security*. 2025.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization. *FAO Strategic Framework 2022-2031*. 2021.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 64.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 64-77.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 77-79.

²¹⁰ UN Development Programme. *Climate Change Adaptation: Strengthening Agricultural Resilience through Transformational Livelihood Adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA)*. 2025.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

Another example of developing sustainable agricultural practices is UNDP and the FAO joint Scaling up Climate Ambition on Land Use and Agriculture Programme (SCALA).²¹³ This programme joins together LRG and the private sector with the expected outcomes being capacity building to identify and appraise innovative, climate-sensitive agriculture and land use actions for twelve countries.²¹⁴ The goal of SCALA is to use the NDC and national adaptation plans for each country as a unique template to utilize land in such a way that is both sustainable and implementable in the immediate future.²¹⁵ Meaningful progress in tackling climate change in the agricultural sectors depends on integrating climate considerations into all agricultural investment decisions, not just climate-specific projects, which requires thorough analysis and the integration of climate responses into broader agricultural development strategies.²¹⁶

Including Local and Regional Government in Adapting the Urban Landscape

Responsible for 71% to 76% of global CO₂ emissions, urban areas are both major contributors to climate change and hubs of financial and physical infrastructure.²¹⁷ Not only are these hubs a large source of greenhouse gasses for countries, 90% are located in coastal regions and are more vulnerable to rising sea-levels.²¹⁸ Despite this, many countries have not adapted their city policies, action plans, or regulations for urban planning and development to reflect nature-based solutions or EbA.²¹⁹ This is largely due to city and development plans that have not been updated to reflect and manage climate change.²²⁰ Many local and regional governments also suffer from lack of capacity, resources, and public awareness on climate variability and climate change-induced hazard mitigation.²²¹

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) bear the brunt of the impact from rising sea-levels with most Pacific Islands maintaining infrastructure within 500 metres of the coast.²²² Between 1970 to 2020 SIDS lost \$153 billion USD to extreme weather events, hindering their ability to develop at the same rate as states not as affected by climate change.²²³ Increasing debt has made it difficult for SIDS to initiate climate action within urban areas, with 40% of states holding unsustainable levels of debt.²²⁴ In 2022, Barbados proposed the *Bridgetown Initiative* aimed at reform of the global financial system, focused on addressing the increasing levels of debt due to extreme climate, inclusion of low-income countries in fiscal space, and making the “global financial system more shock-absorbent.”²²⁵

²¹³ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: The SCALA Programme*. 2025.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization. *Climate Change and Food Security: Risks and Responses*. 2015. p.61.

²¹⁷ UN Human Settlements Programme. *Climate Change*. 2025.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: Small Island Developing States are on the frontlines of climate change – here's why*. 2024.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

Although countries consist of multiple types of natural and urban landscapes, LRGs are frequently excluded from national policy discussions and key implementation processes.²²⁶ A 2022 UN-Habitat survey revealed that among 70 reporting countries, only 28% involved LRGs in national coordination mechanisms between 2016 and 2021, while 21% reported limited engagement and 44 percent reported none at all.²²⁷ LRGs are uniquely positioned to ensure universal access to quality basic services, as they are often the direct providers of essential amenities and infrastructure within urban areas.²²⁸ Within the past two years, there has been a recent shift to incorporate LRGs into the larger conversation regarding adapting the urban landscape.²²⁹ The development of the Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships (CHAMP) at the COP28 hosted in Dubai in 2023 aimed to provide the platform for cooperation between national and subnational governments for financing, planning, and monitoring climate action strategies.²³⁰ As of 2024 \$49 million USD has been financed by the Adaptation Fund to support community level adaptation of infrastructure in developing countries.²³¹ There has also been an increase in participation in the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, with 13,746 cities participating as of June 2025.²³²

In order to support LRGs in technical support for understanding and implementing sustainable and resilient adaptations, UN-HABITAT created the City Resilience Profiling Programme (CRPP).²³³ The CRPP tool uses four indicators of adaptation within the urban system; economy, environment, social life, and institutions.²³⁴ Through the use of CRPP, LRGs can create urban and territorial policies that plan safer and more sustainable cities.²³⁵ UN-REDD supports countries in meeting the requirements of the UNFCCC's REDD+ mechanism to gain access to performance-based finance sources like the GCF.²³⁶

Conclusion

Climate change poses the greatest threat to humanity, impacting 3.6 billion people and prompting global efforts like the *Paris Agreement* and the UN's 2030 Agenda to prioritize adaptation, resilience, and emission reductions.²³⁷ UNDP leads climate action at the country level via the NDCs guidelines by supporting the implementation of NAPs through initiatives such as the Climate Promise.²³⁸ In order to effectively implement adaptation Member States should focus on EbA and nature-based strategies tailored to regional needs.²³⁹ Despite progress, challenges such as insufficient climate finance, limited technical support, and inconsistent integration of climate goals into national policies hinder efforts,

²²⁶ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Inter-agency Policy Briefs on Accelerating Progress on the 2030 Agenda from Local to Global Levels: The Critical Importance of SDG Localization*. 2024. p. 21.

²²⁷ Ibid. p. 21

²²⁸ Ibid. p. 43.

²²⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Dialogue on multilevel partnership for enhanced NDCs*. 2024.

²³⁰ UN Human Settlements Programme. *Climate Change*. 2025.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. *Home*. 2025.

²³³ UN Human Settlements Programme. *City Resilience Profiling Programme*. 2025.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ UN Human Settlements Programme. *CRPiT: City Resilience Profiling interactive Tool*. 2025.

²³⁶ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: UN-REDD*. 2025.

²³⁷ UN Department of Global Communications. *Climate Action Fast Facts*. 2025.

²³⁸ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: What we do*. 2025.

²³⁹ UN Development Programme. *Climate Change Adaptation: Strengthening Agricultural Resilience through Transformational Livelihood Adaptation in Liberia (SARTLA)*. 2025.

especially in developing countries.²⁴⁰ Strengthening agricultural resilience and sustainable urban development are critical components for climate action, with programs like SCALA and SARTLA addressing food systems and climate-sensitive farming.²⁴¹ Tools like the CRPP and partnerships such as the Global Covenant of Mayors are helping LRGs advance inclusive, localized solutions to the climate crisis.²⁴²

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What is currently being done to monitor progress of NAPs? What challenges exist in implementing NAPs effectively? How can LRGs be incorporated into the development and implementation of NAPs? What are potential trade-offs between agricultural efficiency and resiliency and what are ways to mitigate loss of either? What are other sources of funding to support climate initiatives to close finance gaps? What funding has already been allocated to development of partnerships?

²⁴⁰ UN Department of Global Communications. *What Is Climate Change?*. 2025

²⁴¹ UN Development Programme. *UNDP's Climate Promise: What we do*. 2025.

²⁴² UN Human Settlements Programme. *Climate Change*. 2025.

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