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Economic and Social Council Background Guide 2025

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NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025 National Model United Nations Washington DC Conference (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce to you our committee, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staff. This year's committee staff are Director Catherine Tomczyk and Assistant Director Amina Bibi. Catherine has her BA in International Affairs and her MPA and is currently working for the New York State Senate in Syracuse, New York. Amina holds a BA in International Criminal Justice and serves as a youth advocate for the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY). The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretary-General Emma Bott and Secretary-General, Alliyah Edwards.

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Unpaid Work, Informal Employment, and the Economic Empowerment of Women
2. Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations

The Economic and Social Council is a principal organ of the United Nations responsible for advising and coordinating international dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics, overseeing subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies, while leading efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This body contains 54 Member States with overlapping three-year terms, and is overseen by a Bureau consisting of a President and Vice Presidents.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit their Position Papers by 11:59 p.m. (DC Time) on 15 October in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [Position Papers page](#).

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

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact Under-Secretary-General Emma Bott at usgemma.dc@nmun.org or the Secretary-General, Alliyah Edwards at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

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

Catherine Tomczyk, Director
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Committee Overview

Introduction

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

Mandate, Function, and Powers

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

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

- ECOSOC will **generally**: provide policy recommendations to Member States and other international bodies; coordinate efforts by its subsidiary bodies and United Nations specialized agencies; follow up and review progress towards these activities; convene international conferences; create subsidiary thematic commissions, in those rare instances where there is ubiquitous demand for continuous examination of a broad subject area.⁸

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



- ECOSOC **will not generally**: design and implement projects or programs; direct United Nations specialized agencies to develop or implement specific projects or programs; decide on budgetary matters of United Nations entities.⁹

Governance, Funding, and Structure

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 Member States, 18 of which are elected each year by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms under a system of rotation that ensures equitable geographic representation.¹⁰ ECOSOC proceedings are overseen by a President and four Vice-Presidents, which together comprise its Bureau.¹¹ The Bureau sets ECOSOC's agenda, devises action plans, and collaborates with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹²

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

The ECOSOC meeting cycle lasts one year from July to July and is divided into four groups.¹⁹ The first group consists of the Partnership Forum and the Coordination Segment, which are held in February.²⁰ While the Partnership Forum aims to bring together a wide array of stakeholders, from civil society and the private sector to academia and local governments, to discuss and exchange ideas to achieve the 2030 Agenda, the Coordination Segment is set up to coordinate the work of ECOSOC's subsidiary bodies and United Nations specialized agencies through general policy recommendations.²¹ The second group of meetings include various fora established by ECOSOC, including the Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up and the Youth Forum, which take place between April and May of each year.²²

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

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

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

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

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

¹⁵ Ibid.

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

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

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

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

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 4-5.

²¹ Ibid. p. 5.

²² Ibid.



The Development Cooperation Forum, which is also part of the second group, takes place every two years.²³ The third group comprises the Operational Activities for Development Segment, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, and the Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development.²⁴ The fourth group focuses on the review of the implementation and progress towards the 2030 Agenda, comprising the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC and the High-level Segment of ECOSOC, both of which take place in July at the end of a meeting cycle.²⁵ The ECOSOC meeting cycle is further complemented by the Management Segment in June, which focuses on procedural questions and considers the reports and recommendations of its subsidiary bodies and United Nations specialized agencies.²⁶

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

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



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1. Unpaid Work, Informal Employment, and the Economic Empowerment of Women

Introduction

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), women's economic engagement worldwide is affected by the disproportionate amount of unpaid work and participation in informal economies, with an estimated 708 million women left out of the formal economy.²⁷ According to United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) as helping women gain the skills, resources, and opportunities they need to participate fully in the economy, including being able to work and compete equally with men, earn and save money, have a say in how the economy is run, and contribute to shaping policies and institutions.²⁸ Women's economic engagement refers to women's active participation in both paid and unpaid work, which plays a crucial role in driving economic growth and achieving sustainable development.²⁹ UN Women states that by joining the workforce, women directly contribute to increased productivity and higher income.³⁰ UN Women classifies informal employment as the sector of jobs that may include street vendors, goods and service traders, farmers, seasonal workers, and domestic workers.³¹ In 1990, about 36% of the world was living below the \$1.90 a day poverty line, which has decreased to 10% of the human population below that threshold in 2015.³² Although global poverty rates have declined since 1990, the likelihood of women living in extreme poverty compared to men is a 25% difference.³³ According to the Brookings Institution's data, women are more likely to face higher rates of poverty due to domestic duties and unequal access to resources.³⁴

ILO and UN Women highlight the disparities within time spent on domestic tasks for women versus men and signal a possible correlation to gendered labor force participation.³⁵ In 2011, the ILO Convention on Domestic Workers, defined domestic work as work performed in or for a household or households, such as cleaning,³⁶ cooking, and childcare.³⁷ A subsection of domestic work is the sector of the care economy.³⁸ Care work involves two interconnected activities: direct, personal, and relational care tasks, like feeding a baby; and indirect care tasks, such as preparing meals and cleaning.³⁹ The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) reported that 708 million work in the care

²⁷ International Labour Organization. *Unpaid care work prevents 708 million women from participating in the labour market*. 2024.

²⁸ International Labour Organization & United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Decent Work and Women's Economic Empowerment: Good Policy and Practice*. 2012.

²⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy*. 2024.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women in the Informal Economy*. N.d.

³² Kharas et al. . Brookings Institution *The Evolution of Global Poverty, 1990-2030*. 2022.

³³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Women and Girls Closing the Gender Gap*. N.d.

³⁴ Kharas et al. Brookings Institution. *The Evolution of Global Poverty, 1990-2030*. 2022.

³⁵ Hanna et al. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Forecasting Time Spent in Unpaid Care and Domestic Work*. 2023.

³⁶ International Labour Organization . *C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*. 2011.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *International Day of Care and Support*. N.d.

³⁹ Ibid.



economy while only 40 million men do.⁴⁰ Working in the informal economy poses risks to equality and sustainability in the form of lacking legal protections and social benefits such as pensions, insurance, and paid family leave.⁴¹ According to ILO, these measures promote women's economic independence and long-term security by preventing job loss and poverty linked to unpaid care work.⁴² Expanding protections also boosts national economic growth, with studies showing that closing gender gaps in employment can raise global gross domestic product (GDP) by up to 26%.⁴³

International and Regional Framework

One of the foundational documents regarding gender equality is the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948).⁴⁴ Article 23 of the UDHR recognizes that everyone should be subject to equality in all facets of life, including the right to work and have rights to equality within the workplace without discrimination.⁴⁵ The BPA focused on 12 target areas, including poverty, education, and the economy, which effectively synthesizes the persistent problems that still unfairly target women.⁴⁶ Since 1995, the BPA has served as both a benchmark and catalyst for action in implementing gender responsive legislation and driving down persistent gaps in gender equality.⁴⁷ The 2025 UN Women *Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing*, highlights how the gender gaps in the workforce have stagnated, and women still account for 2.5 times more care work than men.⁴⁸

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) created the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) which include, SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 8 (decent work).⁴⁹

Key targets of SDG 5 (gender equality) include target 5.4, which calls for recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within households and families, and target 5.5, which aims to ensure women's full participation and equal opportunities for leadership.⁵⁰ SDG 8 (decent work) focuses on promoting sustainable economic growth and decent work for all; target 8.5 emphasizes a call for equal pay for equal work.⁵¹ UN DESA reports the world is still far from achieving SDG 5 (gender equality), with estimates indicating that it could take another 286 years for the removal of discriminatory

⁴⁰ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Unpaid Care Work Prevents 708 Million Women from Participating in the Labour Market*. N.d.

⁴¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women in the Informal Economy*. N.d.

⁴² International Labour Organization. *World Social Protection Report 2017-2019: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2017. p. 70.

⁴³ Woetzel et al. McKinsey Global Institute. *The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth*. 2015.

⁴⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *12 Critical Areas*. N.d.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Rights in Review: 30 Years After Beijing*. 2025.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ United Nations Office for Sustainable Development. *Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality*. N.d.

⁵¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*. N.d.



laws and eliminate gaps in legal protections.⁵² The ILO Domestic Care Workers Convention (2011) Member States' participation in providing legal and social protections such as pensions, equal pay, and paid time off leave to the workers is at the root of the convention.⁵³

ILO Recommendation 204 (2015) recommendation outlines objectives to guide the transition from informal employment, primarily aiming to create an enabling environment that supports the formalization of workers and economic units.⁵⁴ The recommendation also emphasizes the promotion of decent work by calling for fair wages, safe work conditions, and access to maternity and health benefits.⁵⁵ ILO Convention 183 focuses on implementing social systems to encourage women's economic engagement in formal workplaces through 14 weeks of paid maternity leave, minimum breastfeeding hours, and non-discriminatory employment practices for pregnant women.⁵⁶

In 2023, the General Assembly moved to declare October 29th the International Day of Care and Support through General Assembly resolution 77/317 "International Day of Care and Support," which recognizes the impact of care workers on the entire international economy.⁵⁷ This resolution has also served as a foundational resolution for other United Nations initiatives such as UN Women's Global Alliance on Care, which promotes investment in care infrastructure and fair conditions, often using the International Day as a focal point.⁵⁸

ECOSOC resolution 2024/4 "Promoting care and support systems for social development" emphasizes the need to recognize, redistribute, and support care work across society to promote gender equality, empower women, and enhance social development by ensuring caregivers' and care recipients' well-being and rights.⁵⁹ It also recognized the care economy as a central pillar of sustainable development, advocating for the recognition, redistribution, and rewarding of care work across society sectors, while linking the well-being of both caregivers and care recipients to broader goals of economic justice and social cohesion.⁶⁰ Additionally, the resolution lays the groundwork for legal protections and economic recognition of a workforce dominated by women that has been long excluded from formal labor markets and social protection systems, according to ECOSOC.⁶¹

In March 2025, CSW69 adopted the *Political Declaration on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women* (2025), which reinforces and updates the global commitment to

⁵² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Achieving full gender equality is still centuries away, warns the UN in new report*. N.d.

⁵³ International Labour Organization. *C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)*. 2011.

⁵⁴ International Labour Organization. *Recommendation No. 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy*. 2015.

⁵⁵ International Labour Organization. *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation*. 2015.

⁵⁶ International Labour Organization. *Care at Work: Investing in Care Leave and Services for a More Gender Equal World of Work*. 2022.

⁵⁷ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *International Day of Care and Support*. N.d.

⁵⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. *Global Alliance for Care leads changes in the care economy*. 2023.

⁵⁹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Care and Support Systems for Gender Equality and Sustainable Development (E/RES/2024/4)*. 2024.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.



gender equality.⁶² The declaration also recognizes persistent gaps, including the stagnation of women's workforce participation and their disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, outlines concrete measures to address the challenges and calls on Member States to ensure economic empowerment through access to credit, financial inclusion, fair wages, and strong labor protections that align with ILO recommendations.⁶³

In March 2025, the European Commission, part of the European Union (EU), adopted the Roadmap for Women's Rights, designed to accelerate gender equality across Europe, with a particular emphasis on women's economic rights.⁶⁴ The roadmap focuses on gender mainstreaming across all EU policies and sectors, ensuring that equality is prioritized in financial planning, social protections, and regulations.⁶⁵ One key action outlined on the roadmap is the introduction of mandatory pay transparency with enforcement mechanisms, including audits and penalties for non-compliance.⁶⁶ The goals of the roadmap provide clear targets and actions for the EU to work towards.⁶⁷

Role of the International System

ECOSOC oversees multiple subsidiary bodies that aim to address the issue of economic empowerment including UN Women and CSW.⁶⁸ UN Women is the main international body for women's rights, working for the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) through a series of policy recommendations and reports on the status of women in the economic sector.⁶⁹ UN Women have more direct programs that include vocational training initiatives and entrepreneurship support programs in various regions.⁷⁰ UN Women has also facilitated agricultural cooperatives for women farmers that provide training, access to markets, and financial literacy support.⁷¹ CSW's conference in 2019, CSW63, focused on social protections for women and the equality of women within the workplace.⁷² Building upon the work of previous conferences, in 2025 CSW69 expanded upon the goals of previous meetings and set specific, targeted timelines over the next few years, including promoting women in leadership.⁷³ CSW69

⁶² United Nations Economic and Social Council. UN urges protection of domestic workers' rights during COVID-19 pandemic. 2025.

⁶³ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Political Declaration on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women*. 2025. p.6.

⁶⁴ European Commission. *Gender Equality Strategy*. N.d.

⁶⁵ European Commission. *Commission welcomes the political agreement on new EU rules for pay transparency*. p. 93. 2021.

⁶⁶ European Commission. *The EU Roadmap for Women's Rights: a renewed push for gender equality*. 2025. pp. 14-16.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

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

⁶⁹ Commission on the Status of Women. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*. 2019.

⁷⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women Highlights 2023-2024*. 2024.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Political Declaration on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women*. 2025. p. 4.

⁷³ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Political Declaration on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2025/L.1)*. 2025. p. 4.



has promoted the establishment of community childcare centers and time-use data collection tools in both urban and rural communities.⁷⁴

ECOSOC is committed to the acceleration of progress on gender equality through the United Nations System-Wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP).⁷⁵ UN Women has highlighted ECOSOC's facilitator role in revitalizing CSW.⁷⁶ ECOSOC and the General Assembly host the annual High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which is the central United Nations platform for the follow-up and review of SDGs.⁷⁷ A central focus of the 2025 HLPF is the in-depth review of SDGs 5 (gender equality) and SDG 8 (decent work) and promoting actions that leaves no one behind.⁷⁸

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) advocates for gender-responsive economic reforms and collaborates with partners to produce data on the gendered impacts of informality and unpaid work, providing evidence to drive policy change.⁷⁹ UNDP's *Gender Equality Strategy* (2022) emphasizes that economically empowering women is fundamental to achieving SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 8 (decent work).⁸⁰ This strategy also commits to recognizing, reducing, and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work, identifying domestic and care work as a primary structural barrier to women's full economic participation through advocating for universal social protection floors, minimum wage policies, and improved working conditions across sectors where women are concentrated.⁸¹ ILO, through its Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Branch, provides many crucial recommendations throughout the topic of domestic work, informal economies, and social protections.⁸² ILO and GEDI act as a central body in this issue, where they have made many recommendations on how to transform from an informal to a formal economy, most notably ILO Recommendation 204 (2015).⁸³

the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has adopted critical programs, such as the ASEAN *Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy*, adopted in 2021.⁸⁴ ASEAN has committed to expanding public investment in care infrastructure, including childcare services, to alleviate the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work carried by women.⁸⁵ ASEAN has also collaborated with UN Women to host regional forums and workshops, facilitating the exchange of best practices and building the capacity of national governments to implement gender responsive policies.⁸⁶

Domestic Labor, Time-Tracking, and the Economic Value of Unpaid Work

⁷⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Political Declaration on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (E/CN.6/2025/L.1)*. 2025. p. 4.

⁷⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Gender Equality Acceleration Plan Progress Report 2025*. 2025. p. 19.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. N.d.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025*. p. 5. 2022.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 8.

⁸¹ Ibid. pp.12-13.

⁸² International Labour Organization. *Decent Work*. N.d.

⁸³ International Labour Organization. *Recommendation No. 204 concerning the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy*. 2015.

⁸⁴ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Comprehensive Framework on Care Economy*.2022.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.



ILO estimates that women account for three-quarters of the total number of people employed in the domestic work sector.⁸⁷ The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the lack of and importance of having legal and social protections by causing massive job losses, wage reductions, and heightened health risks for domestic and care workers who lacked formal protections.⁸⁸ The pandemic underscored the urgent need for robust legal frameworks, social protections such as unemployment insurance and paid leave, and stronger safety standards to ensure long-term economic empowerment.⁸⁹ According to UN Women, care work does not just impact women over age 25, it also interferes with young women's ability to find success within educational institutions, as caregiving demands often force them to exit school altogether.⁹⁰ Barriers to progress to women's economic empowerment include the lack of affordable childcare and deep-rooted gender norms that expect women to shoulder the bulk of care duties.⁹¹ By investing in care systems, UN Women estimates the potential creation of 300 million jobs by 2035.⁹² UN Women believes investment in childcare and eldercare services, flexible work policy, and programs such as time tracking that promote equitable sharing of responsibilities within households will help more women join the workforce.⁹³ UN Women is already in partnership with multiple Member States to implement practices such as childcare partnership programs in Southeast Asia and time-tracking efforts in the Caribbean.⁹⁴

One of the most recent approaches of UN Women includes a regional partnerships that aims to track the amount of time spent on unpaid domestic work and how it impacts the economy.⁹⁵ This pilot program, known as *Integrated Population Data and Policy Solutions for SDGs Acceleration*, alongside partner Member States, implements a time tracking system to quantify the amount of time spent physically and how it interferes with women working outside of the house as well.⁹⁶ Barbados is the pioneering Member State in the joint effort in partnership with the UN Women.⁹⁷ The initiative is designed to improve the understanding of how unpaid work is distributed across genders.⁹⁸ The initiative seeks explicitly to depict a clearer understanding of time spent on activities such as childcare, eldercare, and household responsibilities.⁹⁹

⁸⁷ International Labour Organization. *Decent Work*. N.d.

⁸⁸ United Nations Department of Global Communications. *UN Urges Protection of Domestic Workers' Rights During COVID-19 Pandemic*. 2020.

⁸⁹ International Labour Organization. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2021*. 2022. p. 103.

⁹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *A Toolkit on Paid and Unpaid Care Work: From 3Rs To 5Rs*. 2022.

⁹¹ International Labour Organization. *Promoting employment and decent work in a changing landscape*. 2020. pp. 22-23.

⁹² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women & United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024*. 2024. p. 7.

⁹³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World*. 2019. pp 88-90.

⁹⁴ United Nations Caribbean. *UN Women Barbados to Measure Unpaid Domestic and Care Work*. 2024.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ United Nations Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. *Barbados to Measure Unpaid Domestic and Care Work*. 2024.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.



The findings from the Continuous Labour Force Sample Survey, conducted by the Barbados Statistical Service, are preliminary but are expected to inform national planning and policy decisions.¹⁰⁰ The inclusion of this data in official labor statistics marks a significant win in redefining the legal and social frameworks that support women in the economy.¹⁰¹ The partnership between UN Women and Barbados provides an example of how national statistical systems can be used to measure activities that are not directly seen in the market but support the broader economy.¹⁰² By studying and collecting data on unpaid care and domestic work, the initiative offers a foundation for policymaking through exploring the hidden variables in the economy.¹⁰³ This initiative could provide a framework for more expansion throughout Member States and could gather more information about the differences in time spent throughout different regions.¹⁰⁴ The unequal burden of unpaid care and domestic work can be seen through the Barbados pilot with UN Women and how it can affect women's economic empowerment.¹⁰⁵ UN Women highlights that unpaid care responsibilities also limit young women's opportunities through barriers like unaffordable childcare and gender norms further constraining participation.¹⁰⁶ Barbados' initiative integrates time-use questions into labor force surveys that can measure unpaid care work and guide member states in legislation.¹⁰⁷ Including unpaid work in official statistics is a step toward valuing care as essential to the economy and ECOSOC can promote more inclusive policy and data gathering through a new avenue of expanded time-use surveys.¹⁰⁸

Workplace Protections and Women's Empowerment in the Workforce through Social Programs

Achieving SDG 8 (decent work) requires removing structural barriers within gender-segregated labor markets and upholding workplace rights and protections as outlined by ILO.¹⁰⁹ A critical structural barrier is old-age income security, such as a pension, and ensuring financial security in retirement.¹¹⁰ According to UN Women, although women live longer, they are less likely to receive social security safety nets such as a pension while aging.¹¹¹ UN Women reports that nearly 65% of people above retirement age without a pension are women, which underscores persistent gender gaps in old-age income security and a

¹⁰⁰ United Nations Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. *Barbados to Measure Unpaid Domestic and Care Work*. 2024.; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Barbados to Measure Unpaid Domestic and Care Work*. 2024.

¹⁰¹ United Nations Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. *Barbados to Measure Unpaid Domestic and Care Work*. 2024.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations, Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. *Barbados to Measure Unpaid Domestic and Care Work*. 2024.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth* N.d.

¹¹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Five Things to Accelerate Women's Economic Empowerment*. 2024.

¹¹¹ Ibid.



correlation to the disproportionate number of women in the informal work sector.¹¹² ASEAN advocates for states to support children being able to access early childhood education.¹¹³

One of the most challenging periods for maintaining participation in the formal economy for a woman is during their childbearing years of age 15-49, with specific emphasis on when and how they return to work if they take a break for family reasons.¹¹⁴ ILO notes that women between ages 25-54 are less likely to participate in the formal economy at a difference of about 33% and attributes this gap to the challenges of working when having young children through having to balance securing childcare and work responsibilities.¹¹⁵ Although many Member States have adopted these recommendations, there are still 649 million women without proper social protections in the workforce.¹¹⁶ Despite formal commitments, many Member States face structural barriers such as limited fiscal capacity and entrenched social norms that hinder the full realization of protections for women workers.¹¹⁷ ILO suggests that it is essential to focus on encouraging women to transition to formal economies and to ensure that they stay engaged by providing better social protections to women during and after their employment.¹¹⁸

Programs that expand affordable childcare, provide paid family leave, and formalize informal work increase women's participation in formal employment.¹¹⁹ Evidence from the 2021 World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law* report indicates that Member States with strong maternity leave and anti-discrimination laws have higher female labor force participation rates.¹²⁰ ASEAN has made strides in supporting early childcare and recognizing the benefits of doing so for women's economic sustainability.¹²¹ The ASEAN Leaders' *Declaration on Early Childhood Care and Education* stresses the importance of stakeholder collaboration to sustain early childhood care and support enrollment and retention.¹²² ECOSOC, through its functional committees, supports the extension of social protections to informal workers and encourages gender responsive policy reforms through HLPF.¹²³ In 2024, the main focus of HLPF discussions was women in leadership and their access to the same workplace opportunities as men was at the heart of the discussion, signalling ECOSOC's commitment to fostering parity.¹²⁴ To build on these efforts, ECOSOC can continue to commit to promoting these narratives and implementing strong programs to promote leadership in collaboration with its subsidiary bodies, such as the investment in childcare and workplace protections.¹²⁵

¹¹² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and Figures: Social Protection*. N.d.

¹¹³ International Labour Organization. *Social Protection for All Issue Brief*. 2014.

¹¹⁴ International Labour Organization. *Women with Young Children Have Much Lower Labour Force Participation Rates*. 2024.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Department of Communication. *Breastfeeding and Work: A Balancing Act*. 2023.

¹¹⁷ International Labour Organization. *Care at Work: Investing in Care Leave and Services for a More Gender Equal World of Work*. 2022.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ World Bank. *Women, Business and the Law*. 2021.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Early Childhood Care and Education in Southeast Asia*. 2023.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.



Conclusion

The economic empowerment of women is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Agenda, particularly SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 8 (decent work), which together highlight the necessity of gender equality and decent work for all.¹²⁶ Achieving these goals requires breaking down barriers that have long excluded women from full participation in the formal economy.¹²⁷ ECOSOC plays a critical role in coordinating international efforts, including through the promotion of programs created by CSW and UN Women.¹²⁸ Addressing the undervaluation of unpaid and informal work is essential, as women perform the majority of such labor globally.¹²⁹ Similarly, workplace protections throughout the lifecycle of women, including pensions, paid family leave, and maternity protections, are not just social benefits but also enablers of women's long-term economic engagement and security.¹³⁰ Regional bodies such as ASEAN and the EU have demonstrated how legal commitments can be transformed into practical initiatives that strengthen the care economy, formalize work, and broaden access to services that enhance economic engagement.¹³¹ These examples highlight the significance of coordinated, multisectoral responses that transition frameworks into implementation.¹³² ECOSOC continues to emphasize investment in social infrastructure and legal reforms that advance gender equality and encourages dialogues through programs like the HLPF.¹³³ Only through sustained and inclusive efforts can commitments to women's economic empowerment become an attainable goal.¹³⁴

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What steps can Member States take to implement better strategies? How can social and cultural norms be addressed to promote gender parity and wage equality? How do paid family leave and pension benefits address the promotion of transition to formal economies? What steps can Member States take to make lasting frameworks that support women while balancing domestic duties and motherhood?

¹²⁶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls*. N.d.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. N.d.

¹²⁹ International Labour Organization. *Care at Work: Investing in Care Leave and Services for a More Gender Equal World of Work*. 2022.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *ASEAN Leaders' Declaration on Early Childhood Care and Education in Southeast Asia*. 2023.

¹³² Commission on the Status of Women. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Social Protection Systems, Access to Public Services and Sustainable Infrastructure for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls*. 2019.

¹³³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *High Level Political Forum Places Women and Girls at the Heart of the 2030 Agenda*. 2024.

¹³⁴ Ibid.



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2. Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations

Introduction

The global need for humanitarian assistance has surged in recent years, driven by escalating global conflicts, climate-related disasters, and global food insecurity; in 2024, nearly 300 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection.¹³⁵ Humanitarian assistance is a form of aid designed to alleviate suffering, save lives, and protect human rights during and after crises.¹³⁶ This growing need for humanitarian assistance extends beyond violent conflict, encompassing challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, gender-based violence (GBV), food insecurity, education, and workforce development.¹³⁷ Despite these urgent needs, the funding gap for humanitarian aid has widened, reaching USD \$22 billion, with 57% of the required funding met in 2022, underscoring the urgent need for enhanced international cooperation and resource mobilization.¹³⁸ The humanitarian funding gap has widened sharply as the number and intensity of global crises outpace donor funding, resulting in the underfunding of United Nations response plans in mid-2024.¹³⁹ In 2024, the *Global Humanitarian Overview* stated USD \$48.65 billion is needed to assist 186.5 million people in need.¹⁴⁰ Since 1991, the issue of emergency humanitarian assistance has been a recurring topic at the United Nations General Assembly.¹⁴¹ Emergency humanitarian assistance refers to life-saving aid provided in response to crises, including armed conflict, natural disasters, and disease outbreaks that severely impact vulnerable populations.¹⁴² The objective of emergency humanitarian assistance is to preserve human dignity, prevent further harm, and restore stability in affected regions.¹⁴³ This assistance can include immediate relief efforts, long-term humanitarian assistance measures, and short-term recovery measures that lay the groundwork for long-term sustainable development.¹⁴⁴

The United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) plays a central role in coordinating international responses, while the Emergency Relief Coordinator serves as the principal authority on humanitarian issues, reporting directly to the United Nations Secretary-General.¹⁴⁵ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) plays a central role in strengthening the effectiveness of United Nations Humanitarian coordination measures, ensuring that responses are efficient, inclusive, and aligned

¹³⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024*. 2024.

¹³⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Deliver Humanitarian Aid*. N.d.

¹³⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations Report of the Secretary-General (A/78/73)*. 2023. p. 2.

¹³⁸ Agg et al. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. *Financing social spending in humanitarian settings*. 2023.

¹³⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024*. 2024.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ United Nations General Assembly. *Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (A/46/194)*. 1991. p. 49.

¹⁴² United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Deliver Humanitarian Aid*. N.d.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *This is OCHA*. N.d.



with international frameworks.¹⁴⁶ Predictable and sufficient funding is necessary to sustain humanitarian operations, requiring more substantial commitments at the global level.¹⁴⁷ All humanitarian efforts must adhere to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182, “Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations” (1991).¹⁴⁸ As humanitarian crises become more complex, effective coordination among all stakeholders is crucial for a timely and efficient response.¹⁴⁹ Without strong coordination mechanisms, efforts risk becoming fragmented, leading to gaps in aid delivery, inefficient use of limited resources, and diminished impact for vulnerable populations.¹⁵⁰

International and Regional Framework

The United Nations has taken significant steps to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance through the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182, which created the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).¹⁵¹ ERC is a senior-level official appointed by the United Nations Secretary General to lead OCHA in coordinating international humanitarian assistance during emergencies.¹⁵² In 2024, Tom Fletcher was appointed to the position of ERC and will serve a term of two years.¹⁵³ IASC brings together United Nations agencies and humanitarian assistance stakeholders to develop common strategies and standards for providing international humanitarian assistance.¹⁵⁴ General Assembly resolution 46/182 also reinforced core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, and independence.¹⁵⁵ Building on this, the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction* was adopted in 2015 at the Third United Nations Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and outlines key strategies to reduce disaster risk and improve resilience.¹⁵⁶ The Sendai Framework encourages the integration of disaster risk reduction strategies into broader humanitarian assistance responses through four main priorities of understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response.¹⁵⁷ Recent developments under this framework have focused on aligning national strategies with international priorities, improving data collection, and promoting the use of early warning systems.¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2024 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development*. 2024.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Deliver Humanitarian Aid*. N.d.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 49.

¹⁴⁹ European Commission. *Humanitarian Principles*. 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 49.

¹⁵² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *The Emergency Relief Coordinator*. N.d.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *The Inter-Agency Standing Committee*. N.d.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 49.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. 2015.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Words Into Action*. N.d.

¹⁵⁸ United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *UNDRR Focus Areas*. N.d.



These priorities are closely aligned with the adoption of General Assembly resolution 76/133, “Inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness, including in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)” (2022), which highlighted the need to strengthen humanitarian assistance in the wake of a global health crisis.¹⁵⁹ General Assembly resolution 76/133 encourages Member States and local agencies to develop and implement policies that have clear responsibilities, measurable goals, and regular monitoring of humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations.¹⁶⁰ Additionally, General Assembly resolution 78/119 “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (2023) focuses on strengthening humanitarian assistance in response to climate-related disasters, emphasizing the need for improved risk reduction strategies and stronger international cooperation.¹⁶¹

ECOSOC has also worked to reinforce the need to improve the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance through resolution 2023/16, “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (2023).¹⁶² Resolution 2023/16 highlights the need for stronger collaboration between the United Nations organizations and Member States, promoting information sharing, increasing donor funding, and synchronized response efforts to ensure resources are adequately distributed.¹⁶³ ECOSOC resolution 2016/9, “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (2016), reinforces the core humanitarian principles outlined in General Assembly resolution 46/182 (1991), underscoring the importance of impartial and needs-based assistance.¹⁶⁴ More specifically, to enhance the overall effectiveness and responsiveness of humanitarian operations, ECOSOC resolution 2021/17, “Strengthening the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations” (2021) was adopted to promote more sustainable and predictable funding mechanisms that ensure timely, flexible, and needs-based support for affected populations.¹⁶⁵ The adoption of ECOSOC resolution 2024/8, “Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations” (2024), reaffirmed the United Nations’ commitment to delivering coordinated and effective humanitarian assistance, with a strengthening focus on the needs of women and girls.¹⁶⁶

Together, these resolutions are guided by the work of the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which defines a refugee, their rights, and the legal obligations of Member States for refugee

¹⁵⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Inclusive policies and programmes to address homelessness, including in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (A/RES/76/133)*. 2022. p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

¹⁶¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/78/119)*. 2023. p. 10.

¹⁶² United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2023/16)*. 2023. p. 20.

¹⁶³ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2023/16)*. 2023. p. 20.

¹⁶⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2016/9)*. 2016. p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2021/17)*. 2021. p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2024/8)*. 2024. p. 16.



protection.¹⁶⁷ Additionally, Articles 20, 21, and 23 outline the rights of refugees and the responsibilities of host countries providing humanitarian assistance.¹⁶⁸ This framework, along with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), promotes the need for international cooperation to support refugees and provide humanitarian assistance.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, General Assembly resolution 70/1 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” (2030 Agenda) (2015) outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at ensuring sustainable development for all by 2030.¹⁷⁰ SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) emphasizes the need to build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions to respond to humanitarian crises and protect vulnerable populations.¹⁷¹ More specifically, SDG 16.10 on “ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms” by following national legislation and international agreements, which can be achieved through effective humanitarian assistance.¹⁷²

Role of the International System

OCHA plays a pivotal role in coordinating humanitarian assistance across diverse crises, from natural disasters to conflict-driven emergencies.¹⁷³ OCHA's primary responsibilities include mobilizing resources, coordinating field operations, and facilitating communication between actors.¹⁷⁴ IASC brings together United Nations organizations and their partners, such as ECOSOC, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to develop standard policies, coordinate field-level operations, and promote accountability when it comes to humanitarian assistance.¹⁷⁵ IASC works to streamline responses to emergencies, reducing duplications of efforts and ensuring critical needs are met swiftly.¹⁷⁶ Additionally, the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a grant-based fund that relies on voluntary contributions to provide rapid assistance in emergencies.¹⁷⁷ As previously mentioned, ERC oversees humanitarian efforts to ensure timely, effective crisis response.¹⁷⁸ ECOSOC's Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) meets annually with Member States, United Nations organizations, partners, and affected communities to address global humanitarian needs.¹⁷⁹ Due to the increase in humanitarian crises in recent years, ERC has placed a greater emphasis on anticipatory action, using data and risk analysis to trigger early

¹⁶⁷ United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons. *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*. 1951.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Global Compact on Refugees*. 2018.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 2.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 16*. N.d.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 49.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *We coordinate*. N.d.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *The IASC in focus*. N.d.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Central Emergency Response Fund. *Who We Are*. N.d.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *The Emergency Relief Coordinator*. N.d.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *What We Do: Coordinating Humanitarian Action*. N.d.



interventions.¹⁸⁰ Coordination through mechanisms like IASC also enables paid mobilization of resources and more streamlined responses across humanitarian actors.¹⁸¹

In 2024, HAS discussed the adverse impacts of climate change in humanitarian emergencies, embracing new technology in humanitarian assistance, and the protection of women and girls.¹⁸² These discussions ended with the adoption of ECOSOC resolution 2024/8 “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (2024), which reinforced its commitments to coordinated and effective humanitarian assistance for women and girls.¹⁸³ OCHA’s Strategic Plan 2023-2026 outlines six key priorities for humanitarian assistance for today’s modern crises; these priorities include a people-centered humanitarian response, systematic leadership on access, durable solutions to internal displacement, inclusive response, catalytic financing, and ongoing analysis.¹⁸⁴ These priorities are set to help keep modernizing and advancing humanitarian assistance in the rapidly changing landscape of modern humanitarian needs.¹⁸⁵ In 2025, OCHA has recommitted itself to the Strategic Plan and continues to work with IASC to provide adequate and effective humanitarian assistance.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, UNHCR plays a key role in activating numerous responses during humanitarian emergencies.¹⁸⁷

In addition to United Nations-led efforts, there are regional bodies, like the African Union (AU), that play a crucial role in addressing humanitarian challenges.¹⁸⁸ In 2023, the AU partnered with OCHA to launch the 2024 Global Humanitarian Overview, calling for USD \$46 billion in funding to support 181 million people in urgent need across numerous regions in Africa.¹⁸⁹ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has also reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening humanitarian assistance for vulnerable populations after their recent involvement in Cabo Verde, which was affected by disastrous flooding in 2023.¹⁹⁰ ECOWAS has also emphasized regional solidarity and resilience by pledging continued support for disaster preparedness and risk reduction efforts across Member States.¹⁹¹ Since 1992, the European Union (EU) has maintained a strong presence in humanitarian efforts through the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO).¹⁹² ECHO and the EU have worked to provide aid in over 110 countries and are leading donors in humanitarian funding.¹⁹³ For example, the European Commission

¹⁸⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *The Humanitarian Reset - ERC Letter to IASC Principals (11 March 2025)*. 2025.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2024 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment an ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition From Relief to Development*. 2024.

¹⁸³ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2024/8)*. 2024. p. 16.

¹⁸⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *OCHA’s Strategic Plan 2023-2026: Transforming Humanitarian Coordination*. 2023.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Extracts from USG Fletcher’s message to staff on the OCHA reset*. 2025.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Cluster Approach*. 2023.

¹⁸⁸ African Union. *The African Union Commission and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs launch the Global Humanitarian Appeal for 2024*. 2023.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ African Business. *Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) reaffirms commitment to providing humanitarian support to vulnerable communities in member states affected by disasters*. 2025.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. *Humanitarian aid*. N.d.

¹⁹³ Ibid.



has allocated over USD \$300 million for humanitarian assistance programs to assist civilians affected by the War in Ukraine.¹⁹⁴

Strengthening the Effectiveness of United Nations Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms

The effectiveness of United Nations humanitarian coordination mechanisms is crucial for ensuring timely, efficient, and impactful responses.¹⁹⁵ UNHCR, alongside OCHA and IASC, activated a cluster approach system for non-refugee humanitarian emergencies.¹⁹⁶ The cluster system helps spread accountability for the mobilization of resources by bringing together United Nations bodies, NGOs, and other partners to ensure predictable, organized, and effective responses.¹⁹⁷ This system helps ensure that humanitarian responses are not only swift but also strategic, well-resourced, and aligned with the priorities of affected populations.¹⁹⁸ Recent discussions have emphasized innovations to anticipatory financing, localized leadership, and digital coordination tools as ways to enhance the system's responsiveness and inclusivity.¹⁹⁹ These efforts are critical in minimizing gaps in aid delivery and promoting collaboration among international, regional, and local actors.²⁰⁰ While these mechanisms have proven effective, modern crises, such as fragmentation and duplication of efforts, continue to pose significant barriers to optimal coordination.²⁰¹ While these mechanisms have proven effective, however, modern crises continue to hinder optimal coordination.²⁰² Insufficient funding and resource gaps are another major concern as appeals for crisis response are frequently underfunded, leaving humanitarian organizations unable to fully implement their plans and help people in need.²⁰³

ECOSOC resolution 2023/16 "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations" (2023) calls for increased predictable funding, stronger coordination, climate integration, local actor empowerment, and gender-sensitive approaches to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian assistance.²⁰⁴ General Assembly resolution 78/119 "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations" (2023) addresses the United Nations' response to modern crises and emphasizes the importance of integrating modern technology, data collection, and strengthening local partnerships to better adapt to evolving humanitarian needs.²⁰⁵ This resolution highlights the use of modern technology and data, stronger coordination, local

¹⁹⁴ Orbeck. European Careers Association Maastricht. *What is the EU doing for the world? Meet ECHO, one of the world's largest humanitarian aid donors*. 2025.

¹⁹⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024*. 2024.

¹⁹⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. *Cluster Approach*. 2023.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Agg et al. United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. *Financing social spending in humanitarian settings*. 2023.

²⁰⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2023/16)*. 2023. p. 11.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p. 8.



capacity-building, countering misinformation, and gender-sensitive approaches as key strategies for adapting international humanitarian assistance to today's complex crises.²⁰⁶

OCHA strengthens the effectiveness of the United Nations Humanitarian coordination mechanism by leading resource mobilization, enhancing operational coordination in the field, and streamlining communication among humanitarian actors to ensure a unified and timely response across crises.²⁰⁷ IASC offers Peer-2-Peer (P2P) Support to provide senior-level inter-agency peer support to regional Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs).²⁰⁸ The P2P Support initiative works to empower field teams by promoting best practices and helping leaders navigate the complexities of humanitarian response.²⁰⁹ By focusing on enhancing coordination capacity, this initiative contributes to a more effective and streamlined humanitarian response across diverse contexts.²¹⁰ While OCHA and IASC provide a strong framework for humanitarian coordination, additional support structures like ECOSOC's HAS plays a crucial role in advancing these efforts by serving as an annual platform for Member States, NGOs, United Nations bodies, and other stakeholders to review global humanitarian challenges, share best practices, and reinforce collective commitments to more effective and inclusive humanitarian action.²¹¹ In 2024, HAS discussions centered on key issues such as the impact of integrating new technologies into aid delivery and strategies to safeguard women and girls in crisis.²¹² HAS will meet in June 2025 to discuss the transition from relief to development.²¹³ Key outcomes included calls for the adoption of advanced digital tools to enhance aid efficiency and the implementation of gender-sensitive approaches to ensure protection and empowerment of women and girls during humanitarian responses.²¹⁴

Funding and Resource Mobilization for Emergency Humanitarian Assistance

Effective funding mechanisms are crucial for sustaining humanitarian responses during crises; ensuring predictable, flexible, and adequate funding is essential for meeting the urgent needs of affected populations.²¹⁵ CERF and Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) play pivotal roles in delivering timely humanitarian aid while addressing financial unpredictability.²¹⁶ CBPFs accompany CERF by allowing donors to contribute directly to specific humanitarian responses.²¹⁷ CBPFs are managed by OCHA and designed to provide flexible and locally driven funding while empowering Humanitarian Coordinators and

²⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 8.

²⁰⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991. p. 49.

²⁰⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *Peer-2-Peer Support*. N.d.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2024 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition From Relief to Development*. 2024.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2025 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition From Relief to Development*. N.d.

²¹⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2024 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition From Relief to Development*. 2024.

²¹⁵ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Deliver Humanitarian Aid*. N.d.

²¹⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Central Emergency Response Fund. *Funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)*. N.d.

²¹⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Country-Based Pooled Funds*. N.d.



partners to allocate resources based on real-time assessments, ensuring all needs are met.²¹⁸ The combination of CERF and CBPFs helps balance global funding efforts with targeted country-specific interventions, reinforcing the resilience of crisis-affected communities.²¹⁹ The reliance on voluntary contributions, particularly for CERF, means funding levels can fluctuate significantly, limiting the capacity for sustained humanitarian support.²²⁰ To mitigate these risks, ECOSOC resolution 2021/17 on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (2021) emphasizes the need to expand donor bases, increasing contributions to pooled funds like CERF and CBPFs, strengthening partnerships with the private sector, improving transparency and reporting to build donor trust.²²¹ Additionally, ECOSOC resolution 2023/16 on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (2023) builds off of this by highlighting the importance of strengthening donor coordination to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and transparently.²²²

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have emerged as valuable tools in mobilizing additional resources by combining public-sector oversight with private-sector investment.²²³ PPPs can leverage diverse funding streams to support emergency preparedness, response, and recovery initiatives.²²⁴ The private sector’s involvement introduces technological innovation, supply chain expertise, and logistical support.²²⁵ However, there are concerns about the use of PPPs in humanitarian efforts, including profit motives, and the potential lack of accountability and transparency.²²⁶ For example, the World Food Programme (WFP) has partnered with numerous technology stakeholders to improve data analysis and enhance food distribution networks in conflict-affected regions where receiving humanitarian assistance is more complicated.²²⁷ Similarly, UNICEF’s collaborations with corporate partners have expanded their contributions, receiving USD \$6.55 billion in funding from the private sector.²²⁸ These partnerships help fill gaps by mobilizing additional resources and leveraging technological innovations to streamline aid delivery.²²⁹ By ensuring that assistance reaches the most affected populations efficiently, these collaborations contribute to the sustainability of humanitarian efforts, reducing long-term dependency.²³⁰ In addition to these strategies, the OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS) plays a vital role in enhancing financial transparency and accountability for humanitarian assistance.²³¹ FTS monitors global

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Central Emergency Response Fund. *Funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)*. N.d; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Country-Based Pooled Funds*. N.d.

²²⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Central Emergency Response Fund. *Funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)*. N.d.

²²¹ United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2021/17)*. 2021. p. 7.

²²² United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2023/16)*. 2023. p. 11.

²²³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *Guiding Principles for Public-Private Collaboration for Humanitarian Action*. 2007.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ World Bank Group. *PPPs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCS)*. 2020.

²²⁷ World Food Programme. *Private sector partnerships*. N.d.

²²⁸ United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund. *UNICEF public partnerships*. N.d.

²²⁹ Ibid; World Food Programme. *Private sector partnerships*. N.d.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service. *Humanitarian aid contributions*. 2025.



humanitarian funding flows, tracking contributions from donors and expenditures by the proper implementing agencies.²³² By providing real-time data, FTS enables stakeholders to identify funding gaps, assess donor engagement, and evaluate the efficiency of humanitarian investments worldwide.²³³ This transparency is essential for ensuring resources are allocated strategically and equitably.²³⁴

Conclusion

The United Nations' efforts to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance are crucial, as the need for such aid continues to rise due to an increasingly complex and demanding global humanitarian landscape marked by more frequent and severe crises.²³⁵ The mechanisms established through numerous guiding frameworks, such as General Assembly resolution 46/182 "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations" (1991) and ECOSOC resolution 2021/17 "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (2021), reinforce core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence while enabling Member States to deliver life-saving assistance while protecting vulnerable populations during crises.²³⁶ Key bodies such as OCHA, IASC, and ERC continue to play pivotal roles in coordinating field operations, facilitating communication among stakeholders, and addressing emerging challenges.²³⁷

The introduction of P2P support has strengthened leadership capacity in the field, ensuring Humanitarian Coordinators are equipped to manage ongoing complex crises.²³⁸ HAS provides a crucial platform for dialogue, fostering collaboration among Member States, United Nations organizations, and other involved stakeholders to address pressing humanitarian concerns, such as climate change-related disasters and GBV.²³⁹ As the complexity of the modern crisis intensifies, so does the demand for humanitarian assistance, with challenges such as overlapping interventions, fragmented coordination, and limited access to affected regions.²⁴⁰ Innovative funding approaches such as CERF, CBPFs, and PPPs have proven beneficial in ensuring flexible and sustainable resource allocation for humanitarian assistance.²⁴¹ These funding mechanisms enable the rapid deployment of assistance while supporting localized

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *Global Humanitarian Overview 2024*. 2024.

²³⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations (A/RES/46/182)*. 1991.; United Nations Economic and Social Council. *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency assistance of the United Nations (E/RES/2021/17)*. 2021. p. 9.

²³⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Central Emergency Response Fund. *Who We Are*. N.d.

²³⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *Peer-2-Peer Support*. N.d.

²³⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. *2024 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development*. 2024.

²⁴⁰ United Nations Department of Global Communications. *Crisis and Emergency Response*. 2025.

²⁴¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *Guiding Principles for Public-Private Collaboration for Humanitarian Action*. 2007; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Central Emergency Response Fund. *Who We Are*. N.d.



responses tailored to the unique needs of affected populations.²⁴² The integration of the OCHA FTS has further strengthened accountability, enabling donors and implementing agencies to track contributions in real time and ensure resources are distributed effectively.²⁴³

Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can the United Nations further streamline coordination efforts to minimize the duplication of humanitarian aid delivery? What strategies can OCHA implement to improve access to conflict-affected regions? How can P2P support initiatives be expanded to ensure effective regional guidance to complex crises? What mechanisms can be introduced to ensure greater accountability and transparency in donor funding for humanitarian efforts?

²⁴² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Financial Tracking Service. *Humanitarian aid contributions*. 2025.

²⁴³ Ibid.



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