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Commission for Social Development Background Guide 2026

Written by Kelsey Shabanowitz, Mason Sada, Kendrick King, and Johnny Mendoza



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13570 Grove Dr., Suite 294 • Maple Grove, MN 55311
www.nmun.org • info@nmun.org • 612.353.5649

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Kendrick King and Assistant Director Kelsey Shabanowitz (Conference A), and Director Johnny Mendoza and Assistant Director Mason Sada (Conference B). Kendrick studied Health Policy and Management at Georgia Southern University and currently works for a start-up medical networking company focused on redefining personal injury treatment policies. Kelsey holds a Bachelor's Degree in Forensic Science and is doing a certificate in Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy at the University of New Haven. Johnny studied Political Science and International Relations at Cal Poly Humboldt and currently works for an American financing company specializing in renewable energy. Mason studied Business Administration and Finance at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and currently works as an accounting assistant. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Ashlee Ann Rolheiser (Conference A) and Karla Paola Chávez (Conference B), with contributions by Under-Secretary-General for Conference Management Johanna Gunkel (Conference B).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All
2. Inclusive Rural and Agricultural Development

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 PM ET on 1 March 2026 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers website](#).

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

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

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

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

Kendrick King, Director
Kelsey Shabanowitz, Assistant Director
Conference A

Johnny Mendoza, Director
Mason Sada, Assistant Director
Conference B



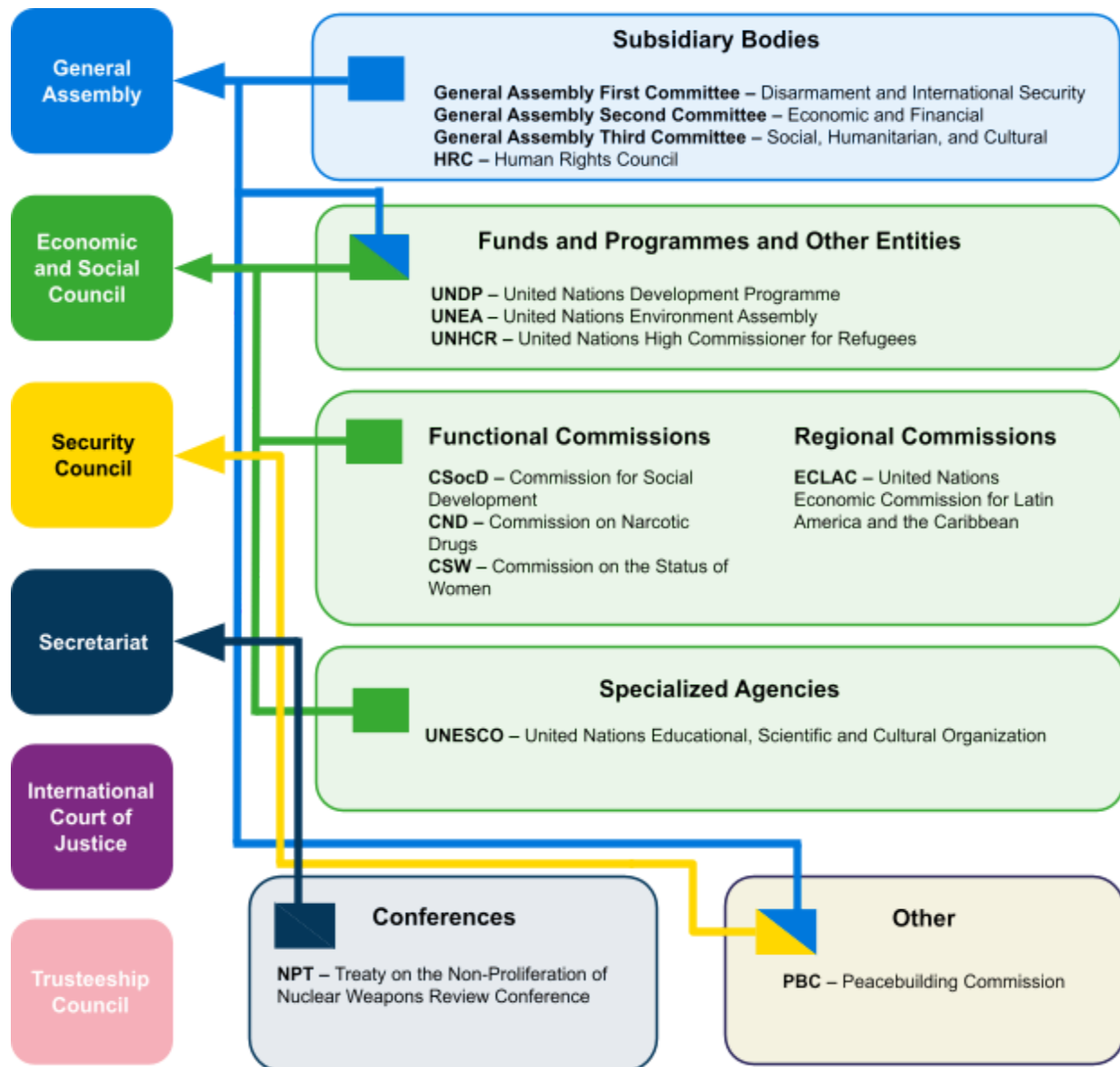
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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN•NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is the functional body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with regard to reviewing and advising on matters of “people-centered sustainable development.”¹ Since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the commission has been tasked with monitoring the implementation of the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development* and *Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development*.² CSocD has a broad purview on matters within its mandate.³

Social progress, justice, and the protection of human rights have been a priority of the United Nations since its inception and are highlighted in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.⁴ The United Nations reiterated its commitment to social development in 1969 with the *Declaration on Social Progress and Development*, which stated that importance must be placed on individual human lives and that social development cannot exist so long as cultural genocide and other injustices remain.⁵ These early documents highlight the United Nations’ commitment to social policy and development throughout its history, which CSocD strives to promote within its mandate.⁶

CSocD, originally called the Social Commission, was established as a functional commission and expert body in 1946 by ECOSOC resolution 10 (II) titled “Temporary Social Commission.”⁷ Initially solely focused on social policy, the Commission’s mandate and membership have expanded over time, and it now serves as a forum for high-level panels concerning development.⁸ The commission views the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) as an opportunity to enhance its role within the United Nations system in promoting international development and monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁹

¹ United Nations, World Summit for Social Development. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*. 1996. p. 2.

² Ibid.; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. p. 164.

³ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. N.d.

⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/RES/2542 (XXIV))*. 1969.

⁶ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. N.d.

⁷ Ibid.; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. p. 164.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ International Institute for Sustainable Development. *CSocD Adopts Resolutions on Youth, People with Disabilities, African Development*. 2017; United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.



Mandate, Function, and Powers

CSocD is a functional commission of and reports directly to ECOSOC.¹⁰ The current mandate of CSocD is to examine existing policy and propose new frameworks to achieve sustainable social development.¹¹ A notable expansion of its mandate came in 1995 at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, when CSocD became the main body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the summit's outcome documents, the *Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action*.¹² The three main themes of the Summit were poverty eradication, productive employment, and social integration.¹³ Another outcome of the summit was for ECOSOC to regularly review the commission's role and strengthen its capacity.¹⁴

CSocD's mandate also includes providing broad policy advice on issues of social development, anticipating potential issues in the area of social development and making recommendations relating to them, promoting the exchange of information among social development stakeholders, and advising ECOSOC on the coordination of social development issues.¹⁵ This mandate may continue to expand as the commission defines its role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; it has been endorsed by the Secretary-General as valuable to achieving the SDGs through its specialized review and policy cycle.¹⁶ As mandated, the commission frequently invites field experts and United Nations leaders to participate in high-level discussion panels aimed at producing action-oriented recommendations to ECOSOC on sustainable development policy.¹⁷

While the following list is not exhaustive, the mandate of CSocD can be summarized as:

- CSocD **will generally**: advise ECOSOC on technical aspects of policy-making decisions regarding social development; establish social objectives, program priorities, and social research in areas of social and economic development; facilitate intergovernmental discussions of major global issues; review United Nations plans and programs of action pertaining to the situation of social groups; otherwise make recommendations to Member States and other bodies.¹⁸

¹⁰ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. N.d.

¹¹ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. N.d.

¹² United Nations, World Summit for Social Development. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*. 1996. p. 84.

¹³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?* 2010. p. 2.

¹⁴ United Nations, World Summit for Social Development. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*. 1996.

¹⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Mandate and Terms of Reference - CSocD*. N.d.

¹⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Poverty Remains World's Biggest Challenge, Social Development Commission Chair Says as Session Concludes with Approval of 3 Texts, Election of New Vice-Chairs*. 2016.

¹⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?* 2010. p. 4.

¹⁸ Ibid.; United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Report on the sixty-first session (E/2023/26-E/CN.5/2023/9)*. 2023; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields (E/2019/INF/3 (Part I))*. 2018. pp. 10-11.



- CSocD **will not generally**: request individual Member States or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to take specific action; formulate binding decisions on social development; implement programs or provide direct financial or technical assistance to Member States in matters of social development.¹⁹

Governance, Funding, and Structure

CSocD is serviced by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which supports the commission in collecting information on the effectiveness of international policy concerning social development.²⁰ The DSPD facilitates the intergovernmental process by resolving logistical challenges that arise when organizing meetings and forums for the commission.²¹ CSocD operates on a two-year review and policy cycle in which one session focuses primarily on analyzing policy and how it has shaped global social development, and the following set of meetings focuses on creating policy recommendations and draft resolutions.²² As a functional commission of ECOSOC, CSocD receives its funding from the United Nations regular budget.²³

The original membership of the Commission was 18, but it has grown multiple times since its inaugural session, with its last expansion in 1996.²⁴ The current membership comprises 46 Member States.²⁵ Membership is based on proportional regional representation, with 12 seats for African states, 10 for Asia-Pacific, five for Eastern Europe, nine for Latin America and the Caribbean, and 10 for Western Europe and Other States.²⁶ CSocD has traditionally had a Bureau made up of one Chair and four Vice-Chairs to help set the agenda for the entire two-year policy cycle pursuant to ECOSOC decision 2002/210.²⁷ Bureau members are elected at the first meeting of each regular session, which immediately follows the conclusion of the previous session, and serve for two consecutive meetings.²⁸

¹⁹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields (E/2019/INF/3 (Part I))*. 2018. pp. 10-11.

²⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Social Policy and Development. *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?* 2010.

²¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *DESA Divisions*. N.d.

²² United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Future organization and methods of work for the Commission for Social Development (E/CN.5/2023/L.3)*. 2023.

²³ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council*. N.d.

²⁴ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. N.d.; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. p. 164.

²⁵ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. N.d.

²⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Poverty Remains World's Biggest Challenge, Social Development Commission Chair Says as Session Concludes with Approval of 3 Texts, Election of New Vice-Chairs*. 2016; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2025-26*. 2025. p. 164.

²⁷ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development (2002/210)*. 2002.

²⁸ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. N.d.



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United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/ecosoc-subsidiary-bodies>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Rules of Procedure of the Functional Commissions of the Economic and Social Council*. N.d. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CHR/RoP.pdf>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development (2002/210)*. 2002. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <https://ecosoc.un.org/sites/default/files/documents/2023/decision-2002-210.pdf>



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United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Future organization and methods of work for the Commission for Social Development (E/CN.5/2023/L.3)*. 2023. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <http://undocs.org/en/E/CN.5/2023/L.3>

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United Nations, General Assembly. *Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/RES/2542 (XXIV))*. 1969. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: [http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2542\(XXIV\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2542(XXIV))

United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. Retrieved 7 November 2025 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/1>

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1. Full and Productive Employment and Decent Work for All

“Decent work is at the heart of the search for dignity for the individual, stability for the family and peace in the community.”²⁹

Introduction

Inequality and instability persist in the global job market despite the annual decrease in global unemployment rates.³⁰ In 2025, the United Nations Global Compact estimated that 33% of global employees, nearly one billion workers, reported earning income that could not support their minimum livelihoods.³¹ 74% of global employees elaborated that a lack of local legislation on accessible jobs had infringed on their rights as workers to receive basic worker protections.³² Guaranteed living wages are protected by several international documents, like the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990).³³ The United Nations Commission on Social Development (CSocD) works with Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to address the rise of inequalities regarding access to decent work and the exploitative working conditions fostered by informal economies.³⁴

The creation of productive employment and decent work is essential for the achievement of sustainable development, as determined by *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).³⁵ SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) focuses on sustainable and inclusive economic growth.³⁶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as any opportunity that fosters productive employment with fair wages, adequate job security with benefits, and prospects for personal development.³⁷ The International Trade Union Confederation's *Global Rights Index* (2025) highlighted a steep decline in access to decent work with a proportional increase in unregulated jobs throughout all economies.³⁸ The 2025 Expert Group Meeting on SDG 8 further elaborated that the lack of access to financial services, like banks, the rise of forced labor and informalities, and a growing digital divide have contributed to the growing inaccessibility to decent work.³⁹ CSocD has convened several sessions, with its latest being the 61st session, CSocD61, to address these issues and formulate frameworks in accordance with the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development*

²⁹ International Telecommunication Union. *Goal 8. Work & Economic Growth*. 2025.

³⁰ International Labour Organization. *ILO expects global unemployment to drop slightly in 2024, but slow progress to reduce inequalities is “worrying”*. 2024.

³¹ United Nations Global Compact. *Living Wage*. 2025.

³² Ibid.

³³ United Nations Global Compact. *Labour and Decent Work*. 2021; 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.

³⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *61st Session Of The Commission For Social Development - CSocD61*. 2023.

³⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.

³⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 8*. 2025.

³⁷ International Labour Organization. *Decent Work for Post-2015 agenda given boost by Group of Friends*. 2014.

³⁸ International Trade Union Confederation. *Workers’ rights collapse across the world: ITUC Global Rights Index 2025*. 2025.

³⁹ United Nations, High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Summary of Expert Group Meeting on SDG8*. 2025. p. 17.



(Copenhagen Declaration) (1995) and “Pact for the Future” (PFTF) (2024).⁴⁰ CSocD has worked to eliminate socioeconomic and gender inequalities that may hinder access to productive work for all.⁴¹

The rise of informal economies significantly impacts access to productive employment and decent work.⁴² The International Monetary Fund defines an informal economy as any productive activity not regulated or covered by labor laws and regulations.⁴³ Commonly referred to as the informal sector, these jobs cover various activities like seasonal work, street vending, and day laboring.⁴⁴ Non-traditional jobs are noted to provide opportunities not available in a formal economy, like granting vulnerable populations employment access by lowering skill or education requirements.⁴⁵ In addition, informal economies are vital in conflict-affected areas where traditional jobs are typically inaccessible.⁴⁶ Regardless, these informal jobs exist in areas with limited or zero government oversight, exposing citizens to dangerous working conditions that may endanger one’s health, while providing little to no profit or benefits.⁴⁷ According to ILO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), informal jobs account for 85% of job availability within developing Member States.⁴⁸ If unaddressed, developing Member States will continue to lack decent work and productive jobs through the absence of taxable income that can improve local services and traditional job accessibility.⁴⁹

The global unemployment rate has fallen to record lows, yet significant employment gaps still remain for vulnerable groups.⁵⁰ Despite the global unemployment rate falling from 5% to 4.9% in 2025, the presence of disparities and vulnerabilities still lingers in finding decent work, especially for youth and women.⁵¹ Since 2022, ILO has estimated that 28 million people have been working under conditions comparable to forced labor, with 2 million people dying annually from hazardous and unfair working conditions.⁵² While globalization has provided benefits for the financial, technological, and educational aspects of employment, it has had a negative effect of intensifying extreme poverty while widening the knowledge and skill gap required to obtain decent employment.⁵³ Women and children, particularly, are more likely to seek informal jobs due to education gaps, marginalization, and social exclusion, preventing them from finding productive jobs.⁵⁴ As such, CSocD, in collaboration with other United Nations bodies and NGOs,

⁴⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *61st Session Of The Commission For Social Development - CSocD61*. 2023.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Torkington. World Economic Forum. *What is an informal economy and how many people work for it?*. 2024.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. p. 5.

⁴⁵ International Labour Organization. *Informal Economy*. 2024.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.; Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme et al. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. p. 8.

⁴⁸ Canelas et al. United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Social protection and the informal economy: What do we know?*. 2022. p. 7.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The 17 Goals*. N.d.

⁵¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Decent work and economic growth*. 2025.

⁵² United Nations Global Compact. *Labour and Decent Work*. 2025.

⁵³ World Summit for Social Development. *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development*. 1995. pp. 3-4.

⁵⁴ Ibid.



works to develop frameworks that can foster greater job accessibility for all and eliminate ongoing disparities and social exclusion.⁵⁵

International and Regional Framework

Access to productive and decent work is a fundamental human right recognized by the international community, in order to improve living conditions for all.⁵⁶ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) serves as a foremost framework outlining human rights, including the right to just employment, and inclusive and safe working conditions according to Article 23.⁵⁷ Article 6 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) advocates for individuals to choose their jobs at will and to use vocational training and policies to improve their economic conditions.⁵⁸ Article 7 of ICESCR endorses inclusive and stable workplace practices, like reasonable hours and fair wages.⁵⁹ The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015) acknowledges the inclusive variety of jobs required to provide decent work for all, including marginalized groups.⁶⁰ The agenda discusses the use of foreign direct investment, a focus on smaller enterprises and funding from the private sector, growth of the trade sector, and increased implementation of women and youth to boost decent work nationally and globally.⁶¹

The Copenhagen Declaration promotes cooperation in national and international communities to improve working conditions for all.⁶² As a formative framework of CSocD, Commitment 3 of the Copenhagen Declaration pledges to provide citizens with resources to expand skillsets, easier access to employment opportunities, and the ability to choose their jobs.⁶³ Commitment 2c aims to involve impoverished citizens in economic policy-making and provide necessary resources to improve employment prospects, including education and technology access.⁶⁴ Ahead of the Second World Summit for Social Development to be held in November 2025, Member States submitted a draft declaration, addressing gaps in the Copenhagen Declaration.⁶⁵ The draft advocates for artificial intelligence (AI) research to enhance employment prospects through its future use in education and providing marginalized populations with inclusive vocational training and education.⁶⁶ ILO's *Decent Work Agenda* (1999) established guidelines for Member States when creating decent work programmes, prioritizing institutional discourse and improving

⁵⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *61st Session Of The Commission For Social Development - CSocD61*. 2023.

⁵⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217(III))*. 1948. p. 75.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. 1996. p. 2.

⁵⁹ Ibid. pp. 2-3.

⁶⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015. pp. 2, 6.

⁶¹ Ibid. pp. 6, 13, 14, 23.

⁶² World Summit for Social Development. *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development*. 1995. pp. 8-9.

⁶³ Ibid. p. 9.

⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 8.

⁶⁵ International Institute for Sustainable Development. *World Social Summit's Zero Draft Political Declaration Out*. 2025.

⁶⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Draft Political Declaration of the "World Social Summit" under the title "the Second World Summit for Social Development"*. 2025.



workers' rights.⁶⁷ The agenda provides the international community with basic standards to follow regarding productive employment, strongly focusing on social and basic rights protections.⁶⁸

Decent work is a core issue highlighted in the 2030 Agenda and the PFTF.⁶⁹ SDG 1 (no poverty) advocates for the total eradication of poverty, as providing citizens with full employment opportunities acts as a key tenet to achieving the SDGs.⁷⁰ Providing fair employment and wages contributes to target 8.5, on "achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value."⁷¹ Setting inclusive working conditions relates to target 10.4 on "adopting policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieving greater equality."⁷² In line with these targets, the PFTF addresses the three international development pillars that agencies should advance, like sustainable development and financing for development.⁷³ Action 34 of the PFTF advocates for the development of decent work opportunities for youth through investments in education and multilateral social and employment-related development.⁷⁴

In developing intraregional economies, addressing decent work through the quality of employment opportunities may strengthen overall socio-economic development.⁷⁵ The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) published *Delivering a Just Transition: Advancing Decent Work, Gender Equality, and Social Protection* (2025), raising concerns about inequalities in labor markets and informal employment.⁷⁶ The region recognizes the need for proper training for transitions into the workforce, focusing on environmental jobs, and utilizes national climate action plans to address gaps in the sector and advance development.⁷⁷ For Arab and North African Member States, the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus raises awareness around the importance of decent work in development and social stability.⁷⁸ UNDP and ILO assisted in HDP Nexus implementation efforts in Western Asia through various initiatives, including cash-for-work incentives for citizens in Jordan and Iraq, and a Multi-Partner Trust Fund in Yemen.⁷⁹ The Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) acknowledges the need for economic structure reform to break the cycle between a lack of decent work and regional poverty levels.⁸⁰ Written in *Towards a Productive and Inclusive Path: Job Creation in the*

⁶⁷ International Labour Organization. *History of the ILO*. N.d.

⁶⁸ International Labour Organization. *Productivity and Decent work*. N.d.

⁶⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. pp. 19, 21; United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future*. 2024.

⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 15; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Employment And Decent Work*. N.d.

⁷¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015. p. 19.

⁷² Ibid. p. 21.

⁷³ United Nations, General Assembly. *The Pact for the Future*. 2024. pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴ Ibid. pp. 23-24.

⁷⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Decent work and economic growth*. 2025.

⁷⁶ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Delivering a Just Transition: Advancing Decent Work, Gender Equality, and Social Protection*. 2025. p. 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 30-31.

⁷⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Linking decent work and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus*. 2024.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Fourteenth session of the Committee on Social Development (E/ESCWA/C.2/2023/7/Report)*. 2023. p. 11.



Arab Region (2021), ESCWA suggests Member States use public funds to invest in growing sectors and improve public access to employment resources for citizens.⁸¹

Role of the International System

CSocD and other United Nations bodies work to strengthen and reorganize existing job structures and policies.⁸² The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) contains several divisions, including the Division for Inclusive Social Development, working with CSocD to provide administrative and policy-making support regarding eradicating employment inequalities.⁸³ ILO is the primary organization focused on labor development and has four main objectives, including improving decent work and the lives of the working population.⁸⁴ The Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development, under ILO guidance, was established to facilitate SDG 8 through specialized policy-making and supervise cooperation between Member States.⁸⁵ The World Economic Forum's (WEF) *Future of Jobs Report 2025* provides insight into global trends regarding economic and industry sectors, as well as suggestions to address evolving labor markets.⁸⁶ UNDP supports the protection of workers through safe working environments and the creation of policies that promote citizen-led initiatives for employment and technology development, as outlined in their Social and Environmental Standards report.⁸⁷ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) collaborates with the United Nations on Generation Unlimited, a program spreading awareness on youth's struggle with unemployment and aims for all youth to have employment or education by 2030.⁸⁸ A large concern for youth unemployment is the lack of skills despite having an education, and ILO's *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (2024) emphasizes the need for skill development in growing fields and private sector intervention to improve the youth population's odds of fair employment.⁸⁹

CSocD has worked with the African Union (AU) on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to improve formal employment within the continent.⁹⁰ Over 80% of workers in Africa are employed informally, therefore, CSocD and AU have utilized NEPAD strategies, like the *African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda* (2018).⁹¹ Part of the strategy identifies that economic organizations should assist in developing decent work

⁸¹ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Towards a Productive and Inclusive Path: Job Creation in the Arab Region*. 2021. p. 69.

⁸² United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Summary of the Expert Group Meeting on SDG8*. 2025.

⁸³ United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Affairs. *What We Do*. N.d.

⁸⁴ International Labour Organization. *Productivity and Decent work*. N.d.

⁸⁵ International Labour Organization. *Decent Work for Post-2015 agenda given boost by Group of Friends*. 2014.

⁸⁶ World Economic Forum. *Future of Jobs Report 2025*. 2025.

⁸⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*. N.d.; United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Social and Environmental Standards*. 2021.

⁸⁸ United Nations Children's Fund. *Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*. N.d.; United Nations Children's Fund. *Transitions from School to Work*. 2019. p. 12.

⁸⁹ United Nations Children's Fund. *Transitions from School to Work*. 2019. pp. 12, 31-32; International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024*. 2024. p. xix.

⁹⁰ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2023/2)*. 2022. p. 2.

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 6; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2025/2)*. 2025. p. 7.



opportunities, as well as inter-organization partnerships within the region.⁹² Several Member States across Africa utilized economic and social partnerships, like the African Development Bank, to analyze and reveal methods to improve decent work policies.⁹³ Key policy changes by regional and international agencies are needed to improve regional decent work prospects by utilizing private sector monetary reserves and updating public funding to promote employment resource development.⁹⁴ AU's collaboration with CSocD on decent work discussions led to *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (Agenda 2063) (2013) to track Africa's progress towards economic development and decent work production.⁹⁵

To promote decent work, CSocD recognizes the need for comprehensive and integrated strategies that cut across multiple disciplines and involve a variety of stakeholders.⁹⁶ CSocD61 specifically focused on how improving decent work can progress recovery efforts after the COVID-19 pandemic and advance the 2030 Agenda.⁹⁷ CSocD's *Report on the sixty-first session (16 February 2022 and 6-15 February 2023)* acknowledges several concerns regarding the priority theme, including the harm of informal economies on workplace security, safety, and employment disparities in marginalized populations.⁹⁸ To address these issues, the Secretary-General suggests restructuring labor markets to improve workers' protections, increasing involvement from the private sector, and providing support for evolving digital, green, and care economies.⁹⁹ The Global Accelerator, introduced by the Secretary-General in 2021, aims to facilitate discussions between various agencies and sectors in hopes of improving accessibility to decent work for economic development.¹⁰⁰

CSocD actively works with NGOs and civil society to hear their proposed solutions on decent work from the international community.¹⁰¹ The Committee for NGOs, reporting to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), provides consultative status to NGOs, allowing their attendance, participation, and policy recommendations in committees without voting rights.¹⁰² The NGO Committee for Social Development (NGO CSocD) has consultative status, working alongside CSocD and other United Nations bodies, advocating for social issues aligned with CSocD.¹⁰³ Annually, NGO CSocD partners with the Division for Social Policy and Development under UN DESA and the Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung Foundation to host the Civil Society Forum, focusing on CSocD's annual priority theme, and allows NGOs to provide best practices for that session's topic.¹⁰⁴ NGO CSocD's participation in CSocD61 provides Member States and

⁹² United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2023/2)*. 2022. p. 6; United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2025/2)*. 2025. p. 7.

⁹³ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2023/2)*. 2022. p. 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 13.

⁹⁵ Ibid. pp. 17-18; New Partnership for Africa's Development. *About*. 2024.

⁹⁶ NGO Committee on Social Development. *Towards a Renewed Social Contract NGO CSocD Civil Society Declaration*. 2023.

⁹⁷ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Report on the sixty-first session (16 February 2022 and 6-15 February 2023)*. 2023. p. 55.

⁹⁸ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Creating full and productive employment and decent work for all as a way of overcoming inequalities to accelerate the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/CN.5/2023/3)*. 2022. p. 2.

⁹⁹ Ibid. pp. 16-17.

¹⁰⁰ Global Accelerator. *Accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda*. N.d.

¹⁰¹ NGO Committee on Social Development. *About us*. N.d.

¹⁰² United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*. N.d.

¹⁰³ NGO Committee on Social Development. *About us*. N.d.

¹⁰⁴ NGO Committee on Social Development. *Commission for Social Development*. N.d.



the commission with several calls to action regarding decent work, including investing in youth within private sectors, committing to decent work policies, and technological innovation to create a people-first economy.¹⁰⁵

Closing the Digital Divide to Promote Better Work Inclusivity

The lack of digital infrastructure in response to growing technology in the job market could impact Member States deeply.¹⁰⁶ The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) reported that over 68% of global citizens had access to the Internet in 2024, yet developing Member States account for less than 39% of global Internet users.¹⁰⁷ WEF highlights how the impact of digitalization has been wide-ranging and multidimensional, with the global job market undergoing massive technological changes, with an estimated 92 million jobs projected to become digital by 2030.¹⁰⁸ With the current digitization of the global workforce, ILO's *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (2022) illustrated the projected creation of over 24 million new digital and productive jobs by 2030.¹⁰⁹ The report emphasized that new digital positions would be more inclusive towards youth and young adults, who are expected to possess the necessary digital skills at employment.¹¹⁰ With the evolving job market hinging on commonplace Internet accessibility and digital skills, RAND Europe projected that Member States that do not address the digital divide in workforce development could potentially lose \$11.5 trillion in gross domestic product growth over the next decade.¹¹¹ In 2024, CSocD62 addressed difficulties in closing the digital divide to promote the creation of productive jobs in the local job market.¹¹² UN DESA and ILO highlighted that digital exclusion among vulnerable groups, gaps in available digital training and skillsets, and a lack of investment in digital infrastructure and accessibility development are common obstacles for promoting new digital work.¹¹³ CSocD partners with relevant actors to promote digital development and foster a productive job market by addressing the absence of policies and regulations that can help Member States further digitalize local workforces.¹¹⁴

CSocD promotes accessible assistive technology for all seeking to overcome employment barriers.¹¹⁵ In 2021, CSocD59 highlighted how Member States recognize the importance of digital technologies in

¹⁰⁵ NGO Committee on Social Development. *Towards a Renewed Social Contract NGO CSocD Civil Society Declaration*. 2023. p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Patterson. World Economic Forum. *Bridging the digital divide to create the jobs of the future*. 2021.

¹⁰⁷ International Telecommunication Union. *Individuals Using the Internet*. 2025; International Telecommunication Union. *Global Internet use continues to rise but disparities remain, especially in low-income regions*. 2024.

¹⁰⁸ Materson. World Economic Forum. *More and more jobs can be done from anywhere. What does that mean for workers?*. 2024.

¹⁰⁹ International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022*. 2022. p. 17.

¹¹⁰ International Labour Organization. *Digital progress without inclusion leaves workers behind*. 2025.

¹¹¹ Salesforce. *The Digital Skills Gap Comes with a Cost: 14 G20 Countries Could Miss Out \$11.5 Trillion Cumulative GDP Growth*. 2021.

¹¹² United Nations, Web TV. *Role of Youth in Digital Transformation: Towards Inclusive Growth and Social Justice*. 2024.

¹¹³ United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Summary of the Expert Group Meeting on SDG8*. 2025. p. 8; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Eliminating Poverty Hinges on Global Community Addressing Structural Obstacles, Delegate Notes, as Commission for Social Development Concludes Its Discussion*. 2024.

¹¹⁴ Soroptimist International. *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*. 2025.

¹¹⁵ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Overcoming the Digital Divide to Ensure Digital Inclusiveness*. 2021.



promoting inclusion for vulnerable groups attempting to gain access to productive employment.¹¹⁶ Speech-recognition and instant translation software are becoming a necessity in eliminating language barriers and physical limitations within a digital workforce, thus leading to broader employment opportunities.¹¹⁷ AI learning modules are constantly developing to promote accessible workplaces to enter employment in fields once thought inaccessible due to their location.¹¹⁸ Digital technologies that help people in any aspect of life, or assistive technology, are an unmet global need that the World Health Organization and UNICEF's *Global Report on Assistive Technology* (2022) highlights.¹¹⁹ The report shares that less than 35% of people in developing Member States have access to assistive technology like prosthetics, speech recognition software, and hearing aids.¹²⁰ CSocD and Generation Equality orchestrated the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality to help train vulnerable groups in gaining access to digital skills and technology using labor digital training platforms, like the ITU Academy Training Centres.¹²¹ These digital platforms are designed to help close knowledge gaps fostered by inequalities, preventing vulnerable groups from gaining employment in formal economies.¹²² The advancement of assistive technology, like AI, have also helped Member States promote greater economic inclusivity through the expansion of employment access to marginalized populations who may not be able to work in-person.¹²³ As the digital world is consistently advancing, especially economically, providing the working population with the means necessary to update skill sets is imperative to protect against unemployment and inadequate social protections.¹²⁴

Addressing Educational Disparities in Youth Unemployment

Youth frequently resort to informal employment due to a lack of societal safety measures and formal opportunities.¹²⁵ As of 2024, 57.8% of employed youth worldwide work under informal employment in a formal economy, causing unsteady streams of income and a system that takes advantage of youth in informal jobs.¹²⁶ Further, the share of informal employment of youth in low-income and vulnerable populations increased to 88%.¹²⁷ The global economy lacks a demand for employment services, such as vocational programs, assistance in job searching, and employer incentives.¹²⁸ 269 million global youth,

¹¹⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Overcoming the Digital Divide to Ensure Digital Inclusiveness*. 2021.

¹¹⁷ Howard. InclusionHub. *The Role of Assistive Technology in the Post-Pandemic Workplace*. 2024.

¹¹⁸ World Health Organization. *Assistive Technology*. 2024.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Fifty-ninth Session of the Commission for Social Development*. 2021. p. 2; International Telecommunication Union. *Building skills for the digital economy*. 2025.

¹²² International Telecommunication Union. *Building skills for the digital economy*. 2025.

¹²³ United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. *Call to Action: Harnessing AI-Powered Virtual Worlds for Social Development*. 2025.

¹²⁴ Sasaki. International Labour Organization. *Technology needs to work for employers and workers in an equitable future of work*. 2023.

¹²⁵ Decent Jobs for Youth. *Youth Transitioning to the Formal Economy: Tackling the Informal Economy, Supporting Quality Jobs for Young People*. 2025. p. 4.

¹²⁶ International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024*. 2024. p. 23.

¹²⁷ Ibid.; Decent Jobs for Youth. *Youth Transitioning to the Formal Economy: Tackling the Informal Economy, Supporting Quality Jobs for Young People*. 2025. p. 4.

¹²⁸ Decent Jobs for Youth. *Youth Transitioning to the Formal Economy: Tackling the Informal Economy, Supporting Quality Jobs for Young People*. 2025. pp. 10-11.



approximately 20.4%, are not actively in employment, education, or training (NEET).¹²⁹ The global workforce skews towards older generations, while the labor market is still limited for youth, as priorities for youth educational opportunities are still developing.¹³⁰ SDG 8 is predicted to be the furthest goal from being achieved by 2030.¹³¹ SDG target 8.6 on “substantially reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training” pledges to reduce youth NEET statistics, although global rates are at a 15-year low.¹³² Employers are constantly evolving their companies, requiring employees to have more elaborate and detailed skill sets that are not readily available.¹³³ Providing youth with stronger employment safety nets and education and training programs is fundamental in forming a well-developed formal economy and decent work for all.¹³⁴

Regional ECOSOC commissions, related agencies, and Member States have progressed towards bridging youth educational gaps to improve employment opportunities.¹³⁵ The Islamic Development Bank’s (IsDB) International Youth Day 2023 acknowledged youth’s role in society and the need for institutions to improve efforts towards their growth in society, especially in areas like employment.¹³⁶ During this meeting, IsDB committed to a multifaceted approach to bridging these gaps, acknowledging their Scholarship Program, which has helped youth engage in higher education, ultimately contributing to economic and social development.¹³⁷ Josour, a regional employment resource created by ESCWA, bridges gaps between private sector employers and prospective youth to improve resources and opportunities for the unemployed generation.¹³⁸ In Bangladesh, FutureNation was introduced in 2025 by UNDP and the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority to invest in youth skills and education development to close national employment gaps.¹³⁹ In a report titled “Realizing Youth Inclusion for a More Sustainable Asia-Pacific,” ESCAP recognizes that growing employer and technology demands increase the need for more educated youth despite inadequate educational outcomes in the region.¹⁴⁰ Their suggestions involve raising awareness about youth NEET rates and barriers set by poor education, suggesting the implementation of more vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and inclusive work placement guidance.¹⁴¹

¹²⁹ International Labour Organization. *Youth NEET rate*. N.d.; United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Summary of the Expert Group Meeting on SDG8*. 2025.

¹³⁰ International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024*. 2024. p. 2.

¹³¹ United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Summary of the Expert Group Meeting on SDG8*. 2025. p. 3.

¹³² United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015; Johnson. United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Youth jobless rate falls to 15-year low, says UN labour agency*. 2024.

¹³³ United Nations Children’s Fund. *Young people unable to access skills needed for today’s job market, new report says*. 2021.

¹³⁴ Decent Jobs for Youth. *Youth Transitioning to the Formal Economy: Tackling the Informal Economy, Supporting Quality Jobs for Young People*. 2025. p. 10.

¹³⁵ United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa. *Towards the 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and Beyond*. 2025. p. 2.

¹³⁶ Islamic Development Bank. *International Youth Day 2023: Islamic Development Bank Champions Youth Empowerment for a Brighter Future*. 2023.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *About Josour*. N.d.

¹³⁹ United Nations, Sustainable Development Group. *From Care Work to Climate Jobs: How Local Action is Powering Global Progress on Decent Work*. 2025.

¹⁴⁰ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Realizing Youth Inclusion for a More Sustainable Asia-Pacific*. 2018. pp. 24-25.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 58.



Confronting skill gaps in an evolving labor market is the best approach to promoting decent work for youth.¹⁴² ILO suggests providing subsidies to Member States via active labor market programmes, which are described in an ILO and World Bank brief, to support entrepreneurship, recruitment in skills program creation, and fair wages establishment for youth.¹⁴³ UNICEF recommends the utilization of a youth skill-tracking system, similar to United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Global Skills Tracker program, for employers to observe skill gaps in existing training programs.¹⁴⁴ Local officials would utilize the data to adapt curricula to reduce youth NEET and unemployment rates, respectively.¹⁴⁵ ILO also recommends safeguards for youth, including cash incentives, resources like early warning systems in secondary schools, and second-chance programmes to give disadvantaged youth opportunities.¹⁴⁶ The European Union's Youth Guarantee serves as an example for economies to follow, which secures opportunities for youth in vocational education and employment through budgeting and improvement in public job services.¹⁴⁷ Prioritizing youth and providing resources to establish themselves in the workforce will play a pivotal role in growing economies around the world.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

In the aftermath of rapid globalization, CSocD has renewed efforts toward improving accessibility to decent work for all.¹⁴⁹ The prevalence of informal economies will always foster exploitative working conditions that infringe upon the rights and safety of laborers, regardless of immediate benefits.¹⁵⁰ Women, children, and other vulnerable groups will be continuously susceptible to forced labor conditions and social exclusion from productive work if changes aren't made to remove inequalities in job accessibility.¹⁵¹ Lack of access to financial services, knowledge gaps, and a growing digital divide are only some of the contributing factors that impede the creation of more productive jobs.¹⁵² In collaboration with NGOs and other United Nations bodies, CSocD will continue to work towards meeting the target goals outlined in SDG 8.¹⁵³

¹⁴² United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Policies and programmes involving youth (E/CN.5/2025/4)*. 2025. p. 18.

¹⁴³ International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024*. 2024; World Bank Group et al. *Active Labour Market Programs Improve Employment and Earnings of Young People*. 2024.

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Children's Fund. *Young people unable to access skills needed for today's job market, new report says*. 2021.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ International Labour Organization. *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2024*. 2024. p. 74.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. xix.

¹⁴⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *61st Session Of The Commission For Social Development - CSocD61*. 2023.

¹⁵⁰ Torkington. World Economic Forum. *What is an informal economy and how many people work for it?*. 2024.

¹⁵¹ International Labour Organization. *Number of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) a cause for concern, despite falling jobless rate*. 2024.

¹⁵² United Nations, High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. *Summary of Expert Group Meeting on SDG8*. 2025. p.17.

¹⁵³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *61st Session Of The Commission For Social Development - CSocD61*. 2023.



Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What is considered decent work and informal work? What factors prevent a Member State from creating more quality jobs in its regions? How can workers find jobs or keep their jobs and benefits during a conflict or natural disaster? Why are vulnerable groups unable to gain employment for similar jobs as the general population? Finally, why are workers unsatisfied with the current job market, despite it having record-low unemployment?



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2. Inclusive Rural and Agricultural Development

*"We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions and to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment."*¹⁵⁴

Introduction

Inclusive rural and agricultural development are key elements in global efforts to end poverty, achieve food security, and build resilient communities.¹⁵⁵ Rural development refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas.¹⁵⁶ Agricultural development focuses on enhancing farming systems, productivity, and sustainability to support livelihoods and food systems.¹⁵⁷ Rural areas are home to the majority of the world's extreme poor, with an estimated 80% of those living below the international poverty line residing outside urban centers.¹⁵⁸ Limited access to essential services such as electricity, safe drinking water, health care, education, and digital infrastructure often deepens poverty in these areas.¹⁵⁹ These gaps not only reduce individual well-being but also hinder economic productivity and increase vulnerability to external shocks.¹⁶⁰

Agricultural development plays a foundational role in reducing rural poverty by enhancing livelihoods through productive and sustainable food systems.¹⁶¹ It refers to the process of improving the economic and social well-being of those engaged in agriculture, such as farmers, herders, and rural laborers, by expanding access to resources such as land, irrigation, technology, and markets.¹⁶² Agriculture remains the primary source of income and employment in many rural communities, and it is significantly more effective in reducing poverty than growth in other economic sectors.¹⁶³ However, without targeted policies that address inequality, the benefits of agricultural growth may bypass marginalized populations.¹⁶⁴ Social development addresses these disparities by strengthening institutions and ensuring that all members of society can participate in and benefit from economic growth.¹⁶⁵ It includes promoting education, health, gender equality, social protection, and rights-based governance frameworks that support inclusive participation.¹⁶⁶ In rural settings, social development plays a vital role in empowering a variety of

¹⁵⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2017. p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021. p. 129.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 17.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

¹⁶¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2017. p. xvi.

¹⁶² Ibid. p. 116.

¹⁶³ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2016. p. 17.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. pp. 12-13.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Commission for Social Development: Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session (E/2019/26)*. 2019. pp. 6-7.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 30.



marginalized groups, including smallholder farmers, women, youth, and Indigenous peoples, groups who are often excluded from decision-making and resource allocation.¹⁶⁷

Inclusive rural development links agricultural and social development to ensure that the benefits of growth are distributed equitably across all segments of rural society.¹⁶⁸ It involves integrating agricultural productivity with social protection systems and infrastructure investment, while promoting inclusive governance and participatory development models.¹⁶⁹ This multidimensional approach aligns with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), which identifies rural transformation as central to achieving key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).¹⁷⁰

International and Regional Framework

In 1948, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) established the foundation for the right to food through reaffirming Article 25(1) in recognizing an adequate standard of living and health for all.¹⁷¹ Building on the principles outlined in the UDHR, the 1966 *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* transformed the recognition of the right to food into a binding legal commitment, embedding it as a core component of the universal right to an adequate standard of living for all.¹⁷² Later, expanding on these two agreements, the 1996 Report of the World Food Summit by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) introduced the concept of “food sovereignty,” an expansion on the right to adequate food by recognizing the rights of small-scale producers and smallholder farmers to define their own food systems and methodologies.¹⁷³ By complementing the right to adequate food, recognizing the right to food sovereignty acts as a means to improve access to adequate food based on each Member States’ specific needs and cultural agricultural demands.¹⁷⁴ Alongside the 1996 report, the *Rome Declaration and Plan of Action* (Rome Declaration) expanded the right to food through formalizing food security’s focus to include smallholder farmers, rural communities, and other underrepresented groups previously absent by emphasizing poverty eradication and social empowerment objectives.¹⁷⁵

Adopted at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995, the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development* (Copenhagen Declaration) committed Member States to placing people at the center of development by promoting poverty eradication, full employment, and social

¹⁶⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2017. p. 98.

¹⁶⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021. p. 90.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 39.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1). 2015.

¹⁷¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Establishment of an Intergovernmental Working Group for the Elaboration of a Set of Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Adequate Food in the Context of National Food Security*(CL 123/22). 2002.

¹⁷² United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (A/RES/2200 (XXI)). 1966.

¹⁷³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Report of the World Food Summit*. 1996.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Rome Declaration and Plan of Action*. 1996.



integration.¹⁷⁶ It laid the groundwork for rights-based, inclusive approaches to development, emphasizing the integration of social, economic, and environmental strategies.¹⁷⁷ The declaration serves as a cornerstone of the Commission for Social Development's (CSocD) mandate and guides global efforts to advance social development objectives.¹⁷⁸ Its emphasis on inclusion, equity, and participatory development aligns directly with the goals of inclusive rural and agricultural development, particularly in addressing the structural barriers that marginalize rural populations.¹⁷⁹

At the World Food Summit in 2002, FAO adopted the *Declaration of the World Food Summit: Five Years Later* (WFS: Five Years Later Declaration) to address the insufficient advancement toward the 1996 Rome Declaration's goals of eradicating hunger and ensuring universal access to safe, nutritious, and adequate food for all.¹⁸⁰ Recognizing that "progress had not been adequate to reach the World Food Summit target," the WFS: Five Years Later Declaration renewed global commitments by explicitly targeting vulnerable populations and highlighting the importance of poverty reduction previously lacking from the Rome Declaration.¹⁸¹ Alongside the WFS: Five Years Later Declaration, FAO Council established the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Right to Food, whose mandate reaffirmed the commitments of the 1996 World Food Summit of reducing the number of undernourished people by logistically supporting ongoing and future agricultural capacity-building development projects within developing Member States.¹⁸² In 2004, FAO adopted the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food, the first intergovernmental agreement to give high-level guidance on implementing the right to food on an international scale by establishing accountability measures while providing practical guidance for Member States.¹⁸³

Focus continued to shift towards the capacity development of agriculture with the United Nations General Assembly adopting resolution 70/1, titled "Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (2030 Agenda) in 2015, creating new global objectives in the form of SDGs more targetable by developing Member States.¹⁸⁴ With the SDGs highlighting new areas of focus for agricultural development – specifically SDGs 1, 2, and 10 – the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2019-2028 as the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNFFF), a framework established to work alongside FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) in specifically addressing inequalities with family farming through poverty education.¹⁸⁵ Supported through seven key pillars that each aim to strengthen or improve family and smallholder farmers through the lens of the SDGs, UNFFF allows policymakers insight into how to strengthen existing infrastructure, policies, and modern digital

¹⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development* (A/CONF.166/9). 1995. pp. 38-39.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 38-39.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations, Commission for Social Development. *Report on the Forty-third Session of the Commission for Social Development* (E/CN.5/2005/7). 2005. pp. 45-47.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 45-47.

¹⁸⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *World Food Summit: Five Years Later* (A/RES/57/271). 2003.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 2003.

¹⁸² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security - Adopted by the 127th Session of the FAO Council, November 2004*. 2024. p. 3.

¹⁸³ Ibid. 2024.

¹⁸⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1). 2015.

¹⁸⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations et al. *United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028: Global Action Plan*. 2019. pp. 8-10.



technologies.¹⁸⁶ The introduction of the SDGs also allowed the United Nations to specifically focus on rural agricultural development through the adoption of the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015, proposing increases in public investments and public-private partnerships in expanding rural infrastructure and agricultural production stability to achieve SDGs 2 and 8 (decent work and economic growth).¹⁸⁷

Role of the International System

CSocD plays a central role in monitoring the Copenhagen Declaration's implementation, promoting social policies that integrate economic and environmental priorities.¹⁸⁸ To monitor progress on commitments related to poverty reduction, employment, and social inclusion, CSocD engages continuously with Member States and civil society by facilitating dialogue, gathering input through annual sessions, and issuing policy recommendations.¹⁸⁹ As a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), CSocD guides on social policy issues related to poverty eradication, employment generation, and inclusive development, while also serving as the primary forum for Member States to discuss progress on the Copenhagen Declaration and its Programme of Action.¹⁹⁰ It operates within the broader United Nations development system and works closely with other ECOSOC bodies to ensure coherence and effective implementation at both the national and international levels.¹⁹¹ Through its annual sessions, CSocD reviews global trends in social development and recommends policy measures that strengthen the integration of social concerns into international development agendas.¹⁹² The commission's focus areas, which include youth, aging, disability, and Indigenous populations, directly intersect with rural and agricultural development, positioning CSocD uniquely to champion inclusive rural transformation.¹⁹³

Several United Nations entities work alongside CSocD to advance rural and agricultural development.¹⁹⁴ Their coordinated efforts reflect a growing recognition that social development cannot be separated from progress in agriculture and rural economies.¹⁹⁵ FAO provides technical expertise on sustainable agriculture, food security, and rural livelihoods, supporting Member States in aligning their agricultural policies with the 2030 Agenda.¹⁹⁶ FAO's work is instrumental in helping governments adapt agricultural strategies to local contexts, including climate conditions, land tenure systems, and community knowledge.¹⁹⁷ This expertise is reflected in flagship publications such as *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* and *The State of Food and Agriculture*, which offer data-driven analyses of global

¹⁸⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations et al. *United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019–2028: Global Action Plan*. 2019. pp. 15-19.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015. pp. 6-8, 16.

¹⁸⁸ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Commission for Social Development: Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session (E/2019/26)*. 2019. p. 9.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 9.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. p. 10.

¹⁹² Ibid. p. 23.

¹⁹³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*. 1995. p. 38.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021. p. 17.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 3.

¹⁹⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2017.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. 2017.



food insecurity and practical policy recommendations to strengthen resilience, promote inclusive rural growth, and advance progress toward the SDGs.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, IFAD focuses on empowering rural populations through investments in smallholder farmers, infrastructure, and market access, aiming to reduce rural poverty and boost agricultural productivity.¹⁹⁹ IFAD's participatory approach supports projects that are locally led and responsive to community priorities.²⁰⁰ For example, in Nepal, IFAD's Agriculture Sector Development Programme empowered farmers to form user groups that helped identify local priorities, resulting in increased agricultural productivity and improved access to irrigation and rural finance.²⁰¹ The World Food Programme (WFP) contributes by addressing immediate food insecurity, while also implementing resilience-building programs in rural communities affected by climate shocks and conflict.²⁰² WFP's efforts to link humanitarian response with long-term development are especially vital in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where disruptions to agriculture often intensify poverty and displacement.²⁰³

In addition to these specialized agencies, the ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) reviews progress on the SDGs, with particular attention to rural development challenges such as inequality, infrastructure gaps, and food insecurity.²⁰⁴ Established as the leading United Nations platform for sustainable development follow-up, HLPF convenes Member States to assess progress on the SDGs and share policy solutions for their implementation.²⁰⁵ This forum enables CSocD to elevate key rural development priorities on the global agenda, reinforcing the need for integrated strategies that align social policy with agricultural and environmental goals.²⁰⁶ The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, held from 30 June to 3 July 2025 in Sevilla, Spain, advanced global efforts to mobilize financing aligned with sustainable and inclusive rural development.²⁰⁷ The outcome document of this conference, the Sevilla Commitment, emphasized scaling up investments in agriculture, climate adaptation, and rural infrastructure through expanded use of blended finance, public investment, and risk-sharing mechanisms.²⁰⁸ This agreement renewed the opportunity to align financing flows with rural needs and the SDGs.²⁰⁹

Regional organizations such as the African Union and the European Union contextualize global frameworks by advancing region-specific strategies for land management, food systems, and digital inclusion.²¹⁰ These bodies support rural development by promoting cooperation between Member States

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p. vii.

¹⁹⁹ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2016. p. 12.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 56.

²⁰¹ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Agriculture Sector Development Programme - Nepal*. N.d.

²⁰² World Food Programme. *WFP Strategic Plan 2022-2025*. 2021. p. 9.

²⁰³ Ibid. p. 21.

²⁰⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: High-Level Political Forum 2022 - Outcome*. 2022.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 2022.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 2022.

²⁰⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development: Adoption of the outcome document of the Conference (Sevilla Commitment) (A/CONF.227/2025/L.1)*. 2025.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 1.

²¹⁰ African Union. *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. N.d.



and ensuring policies reflect local priorities.²¹¹ Civil society and non-governmental organizations also play a critical role in advocating for inclusive policy design and delivering services to underserved areas.²¹² Their involvement grounds development strategies in lived realities, expands access to basic services, and amplifies voices often excluded from decision-making processes.²¹³

While these actors have made significant progress, challenges remain in coordinating efforts across the international system to ensure that rural development strategies are equitable and sustainable.²¹⁴ A fragmented approach risks duplicating efforts or leaving gaps unaddressed, especially for vulnerable populations in remote regions.²¹⁵ For CSocD, this underscores the importance of facilitating dialogue among Member States, United Nations agencies, and civil society to identify synergies and advance the Copenhagen Declaration and the SDGs.²¹⁶ Its role as convener and policy shaper is essential to ensuring that inclusive rural and agricultural development retains prominence in global development discourse.²¹⁷

Expanding Renewable Energy Access in Rural Communities for Development

Although the gap in electricity access between rural and urban populations has narrowed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, 84% of the people without access to electricity still live in rural areas.²¹⁸ As global living standards continue to rise, energy demand is expected to increase at a similar rate, further straining existing energy systems by prolonging power outages within rural and off-the-grid communities.²¹⁹ Meeting this growing demand will be increasingly challenging without the widespread implementation of sustainable, renewable, and affordable energy solutions.²²⁰ With the global population projected to surpass 10 billion by 2050, ensuring efficient and sustainable agricultural systems to meet the global food demand will prove challenging without cooperation between Member States.²²¹

As agrifood systems use around 30% of all global energy, rural populations struggle to keep agricultural infrastructure powered as the individual energy cost of living increases annually.²²² Currently, roughly 2.1 billion people lack access to reliable and sustainable energy, with a third of them living in rural and sparsely populated communities and vulnerable areas.²²³ Decentralized renewable energy and other forms of low-cost energy incentives have seen increasing success within rural, dispersed communities

²¹¹ European Commission. *Agriculture and Rural Development. Common Agricultural Policy. Rural Development*. 2023.

²¹² United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021. p. 73.

²¹³ Ibid. p. 73.

²¹⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Commission for Social Development: Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session (E/2019/26)*. 2019. p. 10.

²¹⁵ Ibid. p. 10.

²¹⁶ Ibid. p. 10.

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. 10.

²¹⁸ World Bank Group et al. *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2025*. 2025. p. 11.

²¹⁹ Ibid. p. 3.

²²⁰ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*. 2025. pp. 22-23.

²²¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Population Prospects 2024: Summary of Results*. 2024. pp. 3-6, 33; United Nations Environment Programme. *How to feed 10 billion people*. 2020.

²²² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Clean energy for all: FAO's role in advancing SDG7*. 2025.

²²³ World Bank Group. *Food and Energy Crisis - The Weathering the Storm*. 2022. pp. 1-11.



across sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, especially within small populations with a heavy reliance on agricultural production.²²⁴ However, only 15.4% of all energy used in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries worldwide comes from renewable energy sources.²²⁵ Combined, the lack of energy stability and investments in renewable energy infrastructure disproportionately affects rural communities that are reliant on agriculture for financial stability and food security.²²⁶ Modular renewable energy solutions, such as solar-powered irrigation and mini-grids, may increase agricultural output by 10 to 30%, yet adoption remains slow due to limited financing and conflicting policy alignment.²²⁷ Furthermore, the United Nations Environment Programme warns that continued reliance on fossil fuels within agriculture will exacerbate climate vulnerability in regions most dependent on smallholder and off-the-grid farming.²²⁸

To achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, global investments in clean and renewable energy must more than triple up to roughly \$5 trillion annually by 2030 to meet rising energy demand and expand access to rural and dispersed populations.²²⁹ Although the costs of renewable energy and its storage have dropped by up to 90% since 2010, the cost of renewable energy technology remains one key issue hindering the scaling up of climate-smart technologies (CSTs).²³⁰ According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, less than 2% of global renewable energy investments in recent years have reached off-grid energy access projects, most of which are located in rural and agricultural areas.²³¹ This leaves rural communities disproportionately affected by a lack of renewable energy, severely constraining the adoption of CSTs.²³² With renewable energies being the least expensive form of energy generation for all Member States, increasing investments in expanding energy infrastructure will significantly decrease the burden on populations currently struggling with energy affordability while simultaneously reducing global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.²³³ Expanding renewable energy generation in rural areas would enhance access to reliable electricity, enabling improvements in local food production, irrigation efficiency, and agricultural processing.²³⁴ As Member States continue their progress towards achieving the SDGs, investing in expanding renewable energy generation serves as a cost-effective way to promote the development of rural communities while increasing the overall standard of living of urban and rural populations alike.²³⁵

²²⁴ International Institute for Sustainable Development. *Financing Rural Infrastructure: Priorities and pathways for ending hunger*. 2018. pp. 21-23.

²²⁵ Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century. *Renewables 2024 Global Status Report, Renewables in Energy Demand: Global Trends, Renewables in Agriculture*. 2024.

²²⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Ending poverty and hunger by investing in agriculture and rural areas*. 2017. pp. 4-6.

²²⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations et al. *Renewable energy for agri-food systems: Towards the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement*. 2021. pp. 15-17, 32-42.

²²⁸ Benton et al. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House. *Food System Impacts on Biodiversity Loss: Three levers for food system transformation in support of nature*. 2021. pp. 10-21, 25, 33-36.

²²⁹ International Energy Agency. *Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector*. 2021. pp. 20-23.

²³⁰ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Renewable Energy for Smallholder Agriculture (RESA)*. 2020. pp. 22-23; International Renewable Energy Agency. *Renewable Power Generation Costs in 2022*. 2022. pp. 34-43.

²³¹ International Renewable Energy Agency et al. *Global Landscape of Renewable Energy Finance 2023*. 2023. p. 110.

²³² World Bank Group et al. *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report 2025*. 2025. pp. 41-42.

²³³ United Nations, Climate Action Team et al. *Seizing the moment of opportunity: Supercharging the new energy era of renewables, efficiency, and electrification*. 2025. pp. 16-18.

²³⁴ Ibid. pp. 19-22.

²³⁵ Ibid. pp. 1-4.



Promoting Climate-Smart and Sustainable Agriculture

The dual challenge for agricultural production of climate change adaptation and mitigation requires an increase in sustainable agricultural production by 60% by 2050 to meet rising food needs.²³⁶ However, agrifood systems within the global agricultural sector only receive 4.3% of global climate financing – with less than 1% going to smallholder farmers – impeding early adoption and expansion of renewable energies, modern technologies, and resilient infrastructure within small- and medium-sized communities.²³⁷ With global food systems being the leading source of methane emissions and other GHG emissions, both cleaner and cheaper alternatives to CSTs are essential for achieving the 2030 Agenda.²³⁸ CSTs are components of climate-smart agriculture (CSA), an integrated approach that applies specific tools and practices to reduce GHG emissions, lower maintenance costs, and enhance the productivity of agrifood systems.²³⁹

Due to a lack of technological development, traditional farming within rural communities is often more labor-intensive than modern agricultural practices.²⁴⁰ This additional burden impedes children, women, and other minority groups from accessing education and professional development opportunities.²⁴¹ As agriculture is among the most hazardous industries, policies promoting technological adoption for risk mitigation should prioritize rural community safety.²⁴² Case studies by FAO examining the impacts of introducing CSA systems within rural communities in developing Member States have found numerous social benefits through knowledge sharing paired with the introduction of CSTs that increase productivity and efficiency while minimizing hazardous and labor-intensive work.²⁴³ Digitized CSTs, such as precision farming and biotechnologies, have played a key role in narrowing the technological gap between urban and rural communities by improving crop yields while simultaneously reducing fertilizer and water use.²⁴⁴ Despite progress in advancing CSTs to improve CSA systems within rural communities, the full benefits of these cases in terms of higher and more stable yields are often not realized until four years after their integration.²⁴⁵

Adopting CSA practices significantly enhances the resilience of rural communities to climate-related shocks, promoting climate-resilient, inclusive development and upgrading infrastructure to better adapt to

²³⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-smart agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2019. pp. 1-5, 11, 15.

²³⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-related development finance to agrifood systems 2024 update*. 2024. pp. 1-8; World Bank Group. *Climate-Smart Agriculture: From Knowledge to Implementation*. 2024.

²³⁸ World Bank Group. *Climate-Smart Agriculture*. 2024.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-smart agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2019. p. 22.

²⁴¹ Ibid. p. 22.

²⁴² International Labour Organization. *Accelerating Action Against Child Labour – Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*. 2010. p. 15.

²⁴³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-smart Agriculture Case Studies – Projects from around the world 2021*. 2021. pp. 7, 9-10, 12, 15-16, 18-19, 21.

²⁴⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Strategic Framework 2022-31*. 2021. pp. 19-21.

²⁴⁵ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-Smart Agriculture: Smallholder Adoption and Implications for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation*. 2011. pp. 7-9.



the increasing global climate.²⁴⁶ Natural disasters caused by climate change have resulted in an estimated \$3.8 trillion in global damages to crops, livestock, and fisheries since 1994.²⁴⁷ Additionally, rainfall that largely enables agricultural production continues to decline due to climate change, with more than 75% of the global population expected to face drought by 2050.²⁴⁸ CSA systems that support multiple objectives in rural communities, such as weatherproofing infrastructure, strengthening energy systems, and expanding transportation networks, promote long-term and resilient infrastructure and advance the technological development of rural communities.²⁴⁹

Despite their benefits, CSA systems can entail trade-offs due to high upfront economic and infrastructure restrictions in rural communities.²⁵⁰ Within rural communities, CSAs may disrupt or displace jobs and existing social structures; some approaches are also energy-intensive due to environmental modifications or require substantial startup investments.²⁵¹ Therefore, rapidly scaling up effective management practices and conducting benefit-cost analyses to assess feasibility during the early implementation stages of CSA systems and CSTs requires coordinated efforts by both Member States and international organizations or funding bodies to adopt pragmatic and actionable policies.²⁵²

Conclusion

Rural areas remain home to more than 80% of people living in extreme poverty, making them a primary focus of global efforts to achieve the SDGs.²⁵³ Agriculture serves as the primary source of livelihood for many rural communities and has consistently proven to be one of the most powerful drivers of poverty reduction.²⁵⁴ This demonstrated potential underscores the importance of integrating agricultural and rural development strategies into national and international policy frameworks to ensure sustainable progress towards reducing poverty and meeting the SDGs.²⁵⁵

However, economic growth alone does not guarantee inclusive outcomes and can exacerbate inequalities if social dimensions are neglected.²⁵⁶ Disparities in access to land, infrastructure, education, and digital

²⁴⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-smart agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2019. pp. 19-21.

²⁴⁷ Global Alliance for the Future of Food. *Public Climate Finance For Food Systems Transportation*. 2024. pp. 8-11, 16-18.

²⁴⁸ World Economic Forum. *More than 75% of the world could face drought by 2050, UN report warns*. 2022.

²⁴⁹ United Nations Environment Programme. *COVID-19, The Environment and Food Systems: Contain, Cope, and Rebuild Better*. 2020. pp. 52-58.

²⁵⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *Climate-smart agriculture and the Sustainable Development Goals*. 2019. pp. 26-27.

²⁵¹ Ibid. pp. 26-27.

²⁵² World Bank Group et al. *Policy Brief: Opportunities and Challenges for Climate-Smart Agriculture in Africa*. 2013. pp. 3-6.

²⁵³ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021. p. 3.

²⁵⁴ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2016.

²⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

²⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021.



connectivity remain significant barriers to both poverty reduction and social cohesion.²⁵⁷ These gaps are particularly evident in developing regions, where rural communities continue to experience the highest rates of exclusion from social and economic systems.²⁵⁸ Social development policies, particularly those encouraged by CSocD, provide a crucial mechanism for addressing these structural inequalities while fostering resilience and community-driven growth.²⁵⁹ CSocD's emphasis on youth, older persons, and marginalized groups makes it well-positioned to support policies that empower rural communities.²⁶⁰

The 2030 Agenda emphasizes that no one should be left behind, highlighting the need for inclusive policies that link agricultural innovation with social protection and environmental sustainability.²⁶¹ These intersections are vital in ensuring that progress in food production, energy access, and climate resilience benefits those who are most vulnerable.²⁶² Enhanced partnerships between Member States, United Nations bodies, and regional organizations will be critical to mobilizing resources, sharing best practices, and implementing scalable solutions that address the interconnected challenges of rural poverty, food security, and climate adaptation.²⁶³ Institutional coordination and meaningful participation from local actors are also essential to ensure that solutions reflect lived experiences and regional needs.²⁶⁴ As the global population continues to grow, inclusive rural and agricultural development remains both a moral imperative and a strategic pathway toward eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, and achieving the SDGs.²⁶⁵

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: In what ways can CSocD more actively integrate rural and agricultural development into its annual agenda and recommendations? How can its mandate around poverty eradication, social inclusion, and rights-based governance be leveraged to strengthen rural transformation? What role do rural women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities play in the design and implementation of development initiatives? How can policies better reflect the lived experiences and leadership of these groups in rural settings? To what extent are regional institutions such as the African Union and the European Union effectively contextualizing global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda, to reflect rural realities? How can cross-border coordination support food security, climate adaptation, and equitable land governance?

²⁵⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2017.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. 2017.

²⁵⁹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. *Commission for Social Development: Report on the Fifty-Seventh Session (E/2019/26)*. 2019.

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 2019.

²⁶¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

²⁶² Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2017: Leveraging Food Systems for Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2017.

²⁶³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Social Report 2021: Reconsidering Rural Development*. 2021.

²⁶⁴ International Fund for Agricultural Development. *Rural Development Report 2016: Fostering Inclusive Rural Transformation*. 2016.

²⁶⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.



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