

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Introduction

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) met several times in the latter months of 2014, including for an ECOSOC Coordination and Management meeting, a special meeting on Ebola as a threat to sustainable development, an event of the Council on Access to Credit-rating Information, as well as to hold a dialogue on the longer term positioning of the United Nations (UN) development system.¹ This update will review Member State discussions in the context of these issues, as well as proposed ideas expounded upon at recent ECOSOC meetings, to gain insight into how ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies function. Furthermore, this update will examine the approaches taken by ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies generally and in relation to the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the implementation needed to ensure success of international development efforts.

Recent Activities

The Economic and Social Council conducts several different types of meetings over the course of the year, including regular and special sessions, to discuss substantive items.²

On 17 and 18 November 2014, at the ECOSOC Coordination and Management Meeting, members adopted three draft resolutions, filled eleven vacancies in subsidiary bodies, and accepted several reports.³ The draft resolutions focused on membership and working methods of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, as well as specifically issues related to collection of data to feed into broader development strategies.⁴ A draft resolution entitled “A Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development” and a draft decision of the “Report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on its Fourth Session and Provisional Agenda and Dates for the Fifth Session of the Committee” were adopted by consensus.⁵ Another draft decision was adopted that established the Republic of Korea as the host of the Twentieth UN Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific from 6 through 9 October 2015.⁶ A provisional agenda for the Twentieth Conference was previously annexed to the Report of the Nineteenth Conference in 2012.⁷ In addition to the draft resolutions, eleven vacancies for subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC were filled.⁸ Lastly, several reports were presented to the Council, including on the UN Environment Programme’s (UNEP) UN Environment Assembly, and the progress report on the ten-year framework of programs on sustainable consumption and production patterns.⁹

On 5 December 2014, a special meeting was held on Ebola as a threat to sustainable development.¹⁰ At this meeting, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasized not only the increasing number of lives lost as a result of the disease, but also the importance of including universal quality health coverage and functioning health systems as “critical elements of the post-2015 development agenda.”¹¹ On 8 December, a meeting of the Council on Access to Credit-rating Information focused on the need for transparency and support of sustainable development in credit-rating systems.¹² Ending the year, an event was held on 15 December in which ECOSOC examined the role of

¹ UN ECOSOC, *Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies*, 2014.

² UN ECOSOC, *Substantive Sessions*, 2014.

³ UN DPI, *Opening Coordination and Management Meeting, Economic and Social Council Adopts Three Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Conferences in Asia, Latin America*, 2014.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*; UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, *Draft Resolution for by the Council*, 2014; UN ECOSOC, *Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, Report on the fourth session (6-8 August 2014)*, 2014.

⁶ UN DPI, *Opening Coordination and Management Meeting, Economic and Social Council Adopts Three Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Conferences in Asia, Latin America*, 2014.

⁷ UN DESA, *Nineteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific*, 2012, p. 27.

⁸ UN DPI, *Opening Coordination and Management Meeting, Economic and Social Council Adopts Three Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Conferences in Asia, Latin America*, 2014.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Ebola: A Threat to Sustainable Development*, 2014.

¹¹ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, *Secretary-General’s remarks at the Economic and Social Council Meeting on Ebola: A Threat to Sustainable Development*, 2014.

¹² UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Panel Explores Developing Fair, Transparent Credit Rating System that Supports Sustainable Development*, 2014.

ECOSOC in relation to the post-2015 development agenda, while maintaining focus on poverty eradication.¹³ In the first part of 2015, ECOSOC will hold several important events and sessions, including a discussion on the UN and development in January; its Operational Activities Segment in February; the Integration Segment on Sustainable Urbanization through Employment Creation and Decent Work from 30 March – 1 April, and a Coordination and Management Meeting in April.¹⁴

Recent Policy Outcomes

During ECOSOC's recent meetings, topic areas included the post-2015 development agenda and transparency in credit-rating systems.¹⁵ Presentations highlighted both successes and issues relating to these topics, allowing Member States to share local and regional experiences and ideas for improvement.¹⁶ Some concerns were raised about the UN's overriding leadership on the global development agenda, which could potentially lead to future issues in the UN system outside of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.¹⁷ While it was clear that there are some concerns on varying local and regional levels, many Member States exhibited positive outlooks regarding the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.¹⁸ For example, the European Union (EU) urged commonality and consensus in order to move towards reaching post-2015 goals.¹⁹ However, Member States also noted areas in which the post-2015 development agenda discussion is currently lacking; for example, Bolivia stated that many developing countries' positions were not acknowledged in discussions on the agenda.²⁰

Another notable policy outcome lies with working towards achieving a credit-rating system that is both transparent and supportive of sustainable development.²¹ In December 2014, several propositions for establishing or modifying credit-rating systems included the creation of a code of ethics, the inability to improve ratings via threats, and maintaining separate ratings for credit-worthiness and sustainability.²² Examples of movement to change credit-rating systems include measures by the United States and the EU aiming to minimize conflicts of interest in the current issuer-payer model of credit ratings.²³

Through the recent foci on the post-2015 development agenda and transparency in credit-rating systems, Member States, civil society organizations, and other interested entities have begun to develop ways to solve existing issues and implement new ideas.²⁴ Several needs were highlighted for a renewed focus on the post-2015 development agenda, including the pertinence of considering the needs of least-developed countries, as a majority of the world's impoverished reside there; the importance of building capacities to achieve goals before attempting to measure impacts; and the need to address coherence in the UN as a development system in order to assure continuity and cohesiveness.²⁵ Simultaneously, when working towards transparency in credit-rating systems there are several areas that must be considered, including the formation of a standard of cost of compliance and regulation across various markets; addressing competition from outside markets by limiting what outside entrants could do; and by stimulating working relationships between regulatory bodies of varying Member States.²⁶

¹³ UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Dialogue Focuses on Long-Term Positioning of United Nations Development System for Post-2015*, 2014.

¹⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies*, 2015; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Integration Segment (30 March – 1 April, 2015)*.

¹⁵ UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Panel Explores Developing Fair, Transparent Credit Rating System that Supports Sustainable Development*, 2014; UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Dialogue Focuses on Long-Term Positioning of United Nations Development System for Post-2015*, 2014.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Dialogue Focuses on Long-Term Positioning of United Nations Development System for Post-2015*, 2014.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Panel Explores Developing Fair, Transparent Credit Rating System that Supports Sustainable Development*, 2014.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid; UN DPI, *Economic and Social Council Dialogue Focuses on Long-Term Positioning of United Nations Development System for Post-2015*, 2014.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Conclusion

The Economic and Social Council serves as a platform for dialogue on sustainable economic and social development and utilizes a number of parties such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Member States, policymakers, among other types of representatives in order to achieve its mandate.²⁷ As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated, “We are on the threshold of the most important year of development since the founding of the United Nations itself. We must give meaning to this Organization's promise to 'reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of the human person' and to take the world forward to a sustainable future.”²⁸ Through its mandate and functions, ECOSOC has the ability to contribute such to the international community.

²⁷ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*, 2014.

²⁸ UN DESA, *Road to Dignity by 2030: UN chief launches blueprint towards sustainable development*, 2014.

Annotated Bibliography

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *About ECOSOC* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/index.shtml>

Delegates can use this page to research a number of non-governmental organizations, as well as browse the programmatic cycle of meetings in the Council, including what is occurring and when it is taking place. This page will help delegates stay afoot of the current happenings of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Further, delegates may use this site to review the mandate and function of ECOSOC. In order to help focus research, delegates should in particular be familiar with the subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC and how and when they interact with ECOSOC.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://esango.un.org/irene/ecosoc.html?page=calendarList&year=2014>

This website may be used as a reference for all of the meetings and events of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies scheduled previously in 2014 and for 2015. Specific dates for meetings are provided, as well as outgoing links to more information for many meetings. Delegates may find this page useful as a means to observe and research the most recent sessions of ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies.

United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. (2014, December 15). *Economic and Social Council Dialogue Focuses on Long-Term Positioning of United Nations Development System for Post-2015* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ecosoc6656.doc.htm>

Delegates may use this resource as a reference for the meeting coverage of the 5th and 6th meetings of the 2015 ECOSOC Session, which began on 15 December 2014. The focus of this session centered around the post-2015 development agenda and how ECOSOC should move forward following the retirement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Issues and positive outlooks are described in the dialogue of these meetings, particularly revolving around the role of the UN development system, organization, partnerships, and impact. Delegates should utilize this page as a guide for understanding the interactions between different entities involved in ECOSOC in relation to this topic.

United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. (2014, December 8). *Economic and Social Council Panel Explores Developing Fair, Transparent Credit Rating System that Supports Sustainable Development* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ecosoc6655.doc.htm>

This meetings coverage document is a useful source for understanding the movement towards transparent credit-rating systems that account for sustainable development. It provides perspectives from both UN bodies and other entities, while focusing on issues that arise for each. Delegates may use this source to ascertain the cooperation needed in order to achieve coherence across the globe in relation to credit-ratings systems. Further, delegates may note the importance of this meeting as a focus of recent work of ECOSOC.

United Nations, Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. (2014, November 17). *Opening Coordination and Management Meeting, Economic and Social Council Adopts Three Draft Resolutions, Including Texts on Conferences in Asia, Latin America* [Meetings Coverage]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/ecosoc6651.doc.htm>

Here, delegates may review the 50th and 51st meetings of the ECOSOC 2014 Session, which occurred during the November Coordination and Management Meeting. This page is crucial for delegates' understanding of recently adopted draft resolutions. Furthermore, this page explains the elections and nominations process for ECOSOC subsidiary bodies in detail, and provides information about recent changes in subsidiary body membership. Delegates may also peruse the reports that were read at these meetings.

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<http://ggim.un.org/docs/Draft%20resolution%20for%20adoption%20by%20the%20Council.pdf>

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2012). *Nineteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific* [Report]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/RCC/docs/rccap19/reports/19th_UNRCCAP_E_Conf.102_8_e.pdf

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2014, December 4). *Road to Dignity by 2030: UN chief launches blueprint towards sustainable development* [Website]. Retrieved 30 January 2015 from:

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/sustainable/blueprint-towards-sustdev.html>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.) *ECOSOC Integration Segment (30 March – 1 April, 2015)* [Website]. Retrieved 2 February 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/integration/2015/index.shtml>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (n.d.) *Reports of ECOSOC to the General Assembly* [Website]. Retrieved 4 February 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/reportga.asp>

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United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, Report on the fourth session (6-8 August 2014)*. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

http://ggim.un.org/docs/meetings/GGIM4/GGIM4%20Report_en.pdf

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Ebola: A Threat to Sustainable Development* [Flyer]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

<https://unite.un.org/events/sites/unite.un.org/events/files/ECOSOC%20Ebola%20Meeting-%20Flyer.pdf>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies: 2014* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

<http://esango.un.org/irene/ecosoc.html?page=calendarList&year=2014>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2014). *Substantive Sessions* [Website]. Retrieved 30 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/substantive.shtml>

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2015). *Meetings and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies: 2015* [Website]. Retrieved 2 February 2015 from: <http://esango.un.org/irene/ecosoc.html?page=calendarList>

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United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. (2014, December 5). *Secretary-General's remarks at the Economic and Social Council's Meeting on Ebola: A Threat to Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 30 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=8254>

I. Mainstreaming Youth in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Introduction

With over 1.8 billion young people worldwide, it is essential for youth to have active participation in developing, implementing, and monitoring global targets to advance and sustain the post-2015 development agenda.²⁹ Some of these significant international targets, according to the United Nations (UN) Population Fund (UNFPA), include “education, skills development and employment, health, especially sexual and reproductive health, youth participation and leadership.”³⁰ Since nine out of ten young people live in less-developed countries, new evolutions in youth population trends have a decisive role in determining the challenges facing youth.³¹ These challenges can impair the ability to successfully transition from adolescence to adulthood due to lack of educational access and preparedness, employment training and opportunities, and health services.³² Since youth are agents of change and the adults of the future, it is essential for the post-2015 development agenda to focus on their participation in fostering and strengthening sustainable development policies to improve the standard of living and health care, education, and access to decent employment.³³

In order to overcome challenges in involving youth, the UN is currently promoting youth participation in global discussions.³⁴ For instance, the 2014 Colombo Declaration on Youth called upon the establishment of a commemorative day to recognize the importance of youth skill development in promoting employment and entrepreneurship.³⁵ Accordingly, the UN General Assembly (GA) adopted resolution 69/145 to proclaim 15 July 2015 as “World Skills Youth Day.”³⁶ Another recent effort to recognize youth participation in development is a report was written by the Secretary-General and submitted to the Commission for Social Development (CSD) (E/CN.5/2014/5).³⁷ Furthermore, to build awareness about issues faced by the youth, UNFPA published the State of the World Population 2014 report on “The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future.”³⁸ This report is important to youth-led organization and advocacy groups as it highlights global youth population trends and data and how it can influence sustainable development worldwide.³⁹ In addition, there are several groups currently working to mainstream youth issues into the post-2015 development agenda, such as the Major Group for Children and Youth, the Youth 21 initiative established by UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organizations (ICMYO), a network of youth non-governmental organizations (NGOs).⁴⁰

Recent Developments

With discussions about the retirement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 agenda increasing, regional meetings have brought together youth organizations, governments and UN agencies to discuss policy-making strategies in order to increase youth participation in development. For example, on 28 October 2014, the Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to Promote Participation, Development and Peace was held in Bangkok, resulting in the *Bangkok Statement*.⁴¹ This statement reflects the ideas and goals of young leaders and civil society on achieving youth engagement in sustainable development by focusing on participation in issues related to the environment, employment, health, peace, and capacity-building, among other important topics.⁴² In addition, the

²⁹ UNFPA, *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*, 2014, p. iii.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, p. 3.

³² Ibid, pp. 31-38.

³³ Ibid, p. 77.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ World Conference on Youth, *Colombo Declaration on Youth*, 2014.

³⁶ UN DPI, *Adopting 68 Texts Recommended by Third Committee, General Assembly Sends Strong Message towards Ending Impunity, Renewing Efforts to Protect Human Rights*, 2014.

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Policies and Programmes involving Youth: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.5/2014/5)*, 2014; UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its 69th session*, 2014.

³⁸ UNFPA, *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*, 2014.

³⁹ Ibid, p. iv.

⁴⁰ UN-CSD Major Group Children and Youth, *MGCY Vision for Sustainable Development Goals*, 2013; UN Youth, *Youth 21*, 2014; IMCYO, *The Asker Conference: Charting a New Path for Youth Participation*, 2014.

⁴¹ ESCAP, *Asia-Pacific Forum on Youth Volunteerism to Promote Participation, Development and Peace*, 2014. p. 1.

⁴² Ibid. pp. 2-7.

meeting on Evidence-Informed Policies on Youth Development, which took place in Nairobi on 5 December 2014, highlighted the importance of youth involvement in Africa’s development agenda and in promoting urbanization.⁴³ The workshop emphasized that youth integration into urbanization policies is essential to the diversification of cities, while allowing for growth and prosperity to reach youth more equally and in a variety of ways.⁴⁴

Opportunities for Mainstreaming Youth

To draw more international attention to youth affected by mental health conditions, the theme of the 2014 International Youth Day on 12 August was “Youth and Mental Health.”⁴⁵ As a supporting report to build awareness about this issue, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) published “Mental Health Matters: Social Inclusion of Youth with Mental Health Conditions” to highlight health conditions affecting youth, as well as why mental health should be recognized as a global topic that deserves international attention.⁴⁶ One section of this report focuses on “Risk Factors Contributing to the Development of Mental-Health Conditions in Youth,” which explains in detail the different social factors affecting youth mental development such as bullying, adverse or stressful life events; situations in post-conflict or disaster areas; nutrition and physical health care; and how these and other factors can contribute to conditions such as behavioral problems, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder.⁴⁷

Given that education is fundamental in improving the socioeconomic conditions of those in developing countries, it is important to recognize that “education is a catalyst for development” and must be considered when approaching the different challenges faced by children, youth, and women.⁴⁸ Recently, on 7 November 2014, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Youth Conference took place in Okayama, Japan, and its resulting document, the *Youth Statement*, focused on recognizing the links to and participation of youth within educational policies; the allocation of resources; and youth potential as facilitators of education, policy change, gender equality, and entrepreneurship.⁴⁹ Furthermore, in preparation for the upcoming adoption of the post-2015 development agenda later in the year, the World Education Forum (WEF) 2015 will take place in May 2015 to discuss the goals and targets for education in the post-2015 agenda.⁵⁰ The discussions, outcomes and recommendations of the 2015 WEF will align with the WEF-proposed goal to “ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030,” to be accompanied by seven specific targets on education.⁵¹

Another important recent effort to prioritize youth-related issues in key UN agencies and in the post-2015 development agenda is the UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP), which focuses on promoting and building awareness and cooperation in five areas: “employment and entrepreneurship; protection of rights and civic engagement; political inclusion; education, including comprehensive sexuality education; and health.”⁵² Youth-SWAP has the potential to close the gap between the work of UN agencies and governmental officials with the voices of youth and society, given that the goal for Youth-SWAP is to increase communication and accountability and to ensure inclusive participation and engagement of youth.⁵³

The Role of Youth in Implementation and Monitoring of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

At the High-level Stocktaking Event on the Post-2015 Development Agenda held on 11 September 2014, UN senior officials recognized the importance of including youth voices to future discussions and recommendations on the development agenda.⁵⁴ During this event, the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, stressed the work done by youth leaders and organizations into formalizing ideas and priorities to create youth-related post-

⁴³ UN-HABITAT, *African Civil Society and Politicians Meet on Youth Policies*, 2014.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ UN DESA, *International Youth Day, 12 August 2014*, 2014.

⁴⁶ UN DESA, *Mental Health Matters: Social Inclusion of Youth with Mental Health Conditions*, 2014, p. iii.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 17-24.

⁴⁸ UNESCO, *Sustainable Development begins with Education: How education can contribute to the proposed post-2015 goals*, 2014, p. 1.

⁴⁹ UNESCO, *Education for Sustainable Development Youth Conference Stakeholder Meeting*, 2014, pp. 1-4.

⁵⁰ UNESCO, *World Education Forum 2015 (WEF) 19-22 May 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea*, 2014.

⁵¹ UNESCO, *Beyond 2015: The Education We Want*, 2014.

⁵² UN Youth-SWAP, *United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth Report*, 2014, p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid, pp. 5-9.

⁵⁴ UN Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, *Youth a priority emphasized by UN Senior Officials in the Post-2015 High Level Stocktaking Meeting*, 2014.

2015 targets, which Mr. Alhendawi affirmed to be “education, employment, health, governance and participation, and peace and security.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, from 28-30 October 2014, the First Global Forum on Youth Policy event discussed social and economic policies that affect youth, which produced an outcome document titled *Baku Commitment to Youth Policies* (2014).⁵⁶ This commitment document affirms the importance of mainstreaming certain ideas, such as inclusiveness, participation, gender, accountability, into future national and international frameworks designed to help youth become key discussion subjects and participants of development in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.⁵⁷

As the UN evaluates the results of the MDGs and shift emphasis to the new post-2015 development agenda commitments, ECOSOC held a Youth Forum at the UN headquarters on 2-3 February 2015.⁵⁸ This forum featured five thematic sessions to develop recommendations on how youth can engage in the global development agenda as a method to utilize current global frameworks and policies.⁵⁹ These sessions included discussions to increase dialogue over a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues affecting youth; to evaluate and implement recommendations; and to ensure the inclusion of youth in decision-making processes.⁶⁰ The outcome is set to become the ECOSOC President’s summary that will be presented at the ECOSOC’s High-Level Segment in July 2015.⁶¹ Additionally, the recent Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the post-2015 agenda, “The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet,” stresses that “young people will be the torchbearers of the next sustainable development agenda through 2030,” and that it is the international community’s duty to ensure a transitional path for young people that includes social inclusiveness, environmental and legislative protection and economic prosperity.⁶²

Conclusion

Young people comprise a larger portion of the global population than at any point previously, and new trends in population growth are impacting the way in which international and national policies are developed and implemented.⁶³ There is international consensus that it is essential to mainstream youth inclusion and participation in decision-making processes in order to ensure that the transition from adolescence to adulthood includes opportunities available for youth to realize their full potential as citizens, as well as agents of change for future sustainable policies, including, importantly, in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

⁵⁵ UN Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, *Youth a priority emphasized by UN Senior Officials in the Post-2015 High Level Stocktaking Meeting*, 2014.

⁵⁶ First Global Forum on Youth Policies, *Baku Commitment on Youth Policies*, 2014.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Background Note United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum 2015*, 2014.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² UN General Assembly, *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet: Synthesis Report of the Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda (A/69/700)*, 2014, p. 3.

⁶³ UNFPA, *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*, 2014, p. 2.

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United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2014). *Mental Health Matters: Social Inclusion of Youth with Mental Health Conditions*. Retrieved 7 January 2015 from: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/youth-mental-health.pdf>

This source is a comprehensive study of youth mental health conditions and how these issues affect youth socially, emotionally and physically; it also explains possible solutions on how to approach and improve mental health conditions. This is a good resource for delegates to consider closely, as it discusses points not currently considered as part of the post-2015 development agenda. This document will help delegates understand that youth mental health issues need to become part of the worldwide discussion when negotiating policies to improve the resources and services available to youth.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Beyond 2015: The Education We Want*. Retrieved 7 January 2015 from: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/Beyond2015_UNESCO-UNICEF-Flyer.pdf

This source details the education targets and goals envisioned for the post-2015 era, which are centered in promoting equal and inclusive education and lifelong learning. These targets will not only complete the goals established in the MDGs, but also encourage an educational framework that reaches all members of society. Given that education is key to development and to improving other main areas such as employment, healthcare, and governance, delegates should consider closely the goals and targets presented in this document. As per their Member States' policy, delegates should consider how these goals can be implemented within their policies and if support can be shared regionally or internationally to help other countries achieve such goals.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2014). *Education for Sustainable Development Youth Conference Stakeholder Meeting: Youth Statement*. Retrieved 8 January 2015 from: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/pdf/esd2014/UNESCO_ESD_Youth_Statement_English_Final.pdf

This document presents targets and goals to improve education for youth, and is a key document for delegates to consider. It provides delegates with a framework and a set of recommendations to incorporate in future commitments regarding education, sustainable development, employment, equality and inclusion. These recommendations will also guide delegates with how to recognize how education affects youth development and which areas are priorities for discussion in future talks.

United Nations Population Fund. (2014). *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future* [Report]. Retrieved 7 January 2015 from: http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf

This annual UNFPA report on population trends is dedicated to how young people have the power to influence the post-2015 development agenda framework through education, employment, civil participation, and healthcare. As delegates prepare for the conference, this document not only contains the most current statistic numbers and trends, but also detailed information about how these changes in population affect the different issues facing youth today. This document can help delegates further understand the role of youth by closely considering the last section about youth in the post-2015 development agenda.

United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth. (2014). *United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Youth Report*. Retrieved 7 January 2015 from: http://unyouthswap.org/system/refinery/resources/2014/10/15/20_42_35_106_UN_Youth_SWAP_Report_2014.pdf

This report explains the origin, purpose and expectations of the UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth (Youth-SWAP). It focuses on explaining the different social and economic aspects in which youth involvement is important and necessary to advance development. The information provided

will help delegates understand the different policies and strategies already in place and what must be strengthened, recalled and/or promoted to effectively move forward with the post-2015 agenda.

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II. Fostering Sustainable Development Practices through Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Introduction

Throughout the post-2015 preparation process, there has been a growing emphasis on placing people and human rights at the core of the new development agenda. Representing half the human population, women are members of all sectors of society and their rights must be protected in broad development issues such as health, poverty eradication, food security, and urbanization.⁶⁴ In recognition of their pervasive importance to society and as part of his call for inclusive development, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called this “the century of women.”⁶⁵ Gender mainstreaming plays a key role in ECOSOC’s agenda through its mandate over the three pillars of sustainable development and efforts to ensure the implementation of gender mainstreaming in all policies, human resources development programs, and economic investments in the international system (E/RES/2014/2).⁶⁶

Four recent United Nations (UN) reports support gender mainstreaming throughout the post-2015 development framework as well as through a singular Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to achieve gender equality. These include reports from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (A/HRC/27/73), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) (E/CN.6/2015/2), and two reports by the Secretary-General on the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (A/69/700) and implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (E/CN.6/2015/3).⁶⁷ Prevalent points focus on protecting human rights and increasing political and economic opportunities for women, specifically autonomy over sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), eliminating discrimination against women, access to water and sanitation, gender-responsive budgeting, disaggregated data, and multi-stakeholder accountability for implementation.⁶⁸ The General Assembly also adopted several resolutions that emphasize the benefits of women’s full participation for combatting health and security issues of violence, human trafficking, and genital mutilation, and requested an updated report from UN-Women to highlight “emerging development themes that have an impact on the role of women in the economy.”⁶⁹

The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995) continues to be the most important international policy framework on gender equality, and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) monitors implementation.⁷⁰ The

⁶⁴ UNFPA, *Population Dynamics in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Report of the Global Thematic Consultation on Population Dynamics*, 2014.

⁶⁵ UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet* (A/69/700), 2014.

⁶⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System* (E/RES/2014/2), 2014; UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC and Integration for Sustainable Development*, 2015.

⁶⁷ UN Human Rights Council, *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women’s human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda* (A/HRC/27/73), 2014; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (E/CN.6/2015/2), 2014; UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet* (A/69/700), 2014; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General* (E/CN.6/2015/3), 2014.

⁶⁸ UN Human Rights Council, *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women’s human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda* (A/HRC/27/73), 2014; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Normative aspects of the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (E/CN.6/2015/2), 2014; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General* (E/CN.6/2015/3), 2014.

⁶⁹ UN General Assembly, *Advancement of women* (A/69/481), 2014; UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly* (A/RES/69/151), 2014; UN-Women, *Synergies between sustainable development and gender equality undeniable, policy change needed: UN report*, 2014; UN, *Acting upon Recommendation by Second Committee, General Assembly Adopts 43 Texts, Defers Action on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Framework Draft*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* (A/RES/69/236), 2014.

⁷⁰ UN-Women, *Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Discussion guide for the ministerial round tables to be held under the overall theme “Priorities for future action to realize gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls”* (E/CN.6/2015/4), 2014.

Platform for Action's upcoming twenty-year review conference in March 2015 will emphasize women's economic empowerment in the post-2015 development agenda, with discussions on topics such as "making the economy work for women and girls," "investing in gender equality and the empowerment of women," and "lessons learned for gender equality from the [Millennium Development Goals] MDGs," the last of which will help shape ECOSOC's 2015 theme of transition from the MDGs to the SDGs.⁷¹ UN-Women serves as CSW's substantive secretariat and provides accountability for gender equality policies within the UN system through the *System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* (UN-SWAP, 2012) as well as guidance and operational support to Member States implementing gender perspectives in national programs.⁷² Additional international documents that underpin sustainable development issues include the 1992 *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (Agenda 21) and *Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288) from the follow up Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20).⁷³

The Secretary-General highlighted the themes of equality, inclusion, and social justice in development on "International Human Solidarity Day" on 20 December 2014.⁷⁴ The particular role of women was also prominently discussed at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in September 2014, and in a follow-up meeting, the President of ECOSOC emphasized the importance of "mobilizing actors from all walks of society" to achieve sustainable development, including "empowering women and girls."⁷⁵ Despite this, there is concern among civil society, such as the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR) and the Women's Major Group (WMG), that the post-2015 development agenda may not focus on gender equality with the prominence this issue needs in order to be effectively integrated into all development goals.⁷⁶

Recent Developments

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway*, which was agreed at the Third International Conference of SIDS and later adopted by the General Assembly (A/RES/69/15), reflects that women's empowerment creates "a transformative and multiplier effect on sustainable development and is a driver of economic growth."⁷⁷ The document not only contains a section devoted to gender equality and women's empowerment, but is a model of including a gender perspective into development recommendations for education, economic investment, food security, water and sanitation, and disaster preparedness, noting that "gender equality and the effective participation of women [...] are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change."⁷⁸ Additionally, a case study by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) of long-term policies in Tunisia shows a correlation between social, economic, and political reforms that reduce gender inequality and vast improvements in women's health, education, and political representation.⁷⁹ In a shorter term, the Secretary-General's report on the "Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women" (E/CN.6/2015/5) identified successes in alleviating poverty and unemployment through the provision of microloans, training programs, and investment in female entrepreneurs, but stressed the exacerbation of inequalities issues by conflict and the need "to ensure women's participation across all programming."⁸⁰

⁷¹ UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Discussion guide for the ministerial round tables to be held under the overall theme "Priorities for future action to realize gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights of women and girls"* (E/CN.6/2015/4), 2014; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Proposed organization of work* (E/CN.6/2015/1/Add.1); 2014.

⁷² UN General Assembly, *System-wide coherence* (A/RES/64/289), 2010; UN-Women, *Promoting UN accountability* (UN-SWAP), 2015.

⁷³ UN General Assembly, *Future We Want* (A/RES/66/288), 2012.

⁷⁴ UN, *International Human Solidarity Day: Secretary-General's Message for 2014*, 2014.

⁷⁵ UN, *Opening remarks at "ECOSOC Informal stock-taking meeting on the outcome of the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States,"* 2014; UN, *Closing remarks at "ECOSOC Informal stock-taking meeting on the outcome of the 3rd International Conference on Small Island Developing States,"* 2014.

⁷⁶ CESCR, *2015: Seminal Year for Integrating Human Rights and Sustainable Development?*, 2014; Women's Major Group, *Women Major Group Response to the SG's Synthesis Report: "The Road to Dignity by 2030,"* 2014.

⁷⁷ UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *SAMOA: Pacific women, youth to benefit from partnerships*, 2014; UN General Assembly, *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* (A/RES/69/15), 2014.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway* (A/RES/69/15), 2014.

⁷⁹ Chambers and Cummings, *Building momentum: women's empowerment in Tunisia*, 2014.

⁸⁰ UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women: Report of the Secretary-General* (E/CN.6/2015/5), 2014.

The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Economic success is central to current dialogue on this topic, partly because the new development agenda will only be realized with adequate funding from a combination of official development assistance, domestic resources, and private investments.⁸¹ In his recent synthesis report, the Secretary-General identified key areas to increase women's participation, such as by increasing investments in women and fostering entrepreneurship through access to land, productive credit, and training.⁸² These recommendations are in line with aspects of the SAMOA Pathway that seek to mobilize women as rural farmers to fight food insecurity.⁸³ One criticism of the post-2015 discourse is that “women and children” are sometimes discussed synonymously; it is important for policymakers to consider gender separately at all levels, for example recognizing the girl child as a distinct subset of “youth,” so as not to lose sight of women's empowerment among initiatives aimed at other vulnerable groups.⁸⁴ The Secretary-General, HRC, and other intergovernmental organizations also recognize the need for changes in data collection to improve the goal implementation and monitoring process over the MDGs, under which there was no data to track violence against women.⁸⁵ In order to verify progress on goals related to gender equality and the empowerment of women, statisticians must integrate gender perspectives in key development statistics such as housing, health, work, and poverty, as well as factor age into sex-disaggregated data to distinguish between adolescents and older women.⁸⁶

Conclusion

This topic remains a crosscutting issue throughout the dimensions of social, economic, and environmental development that demands the attention of the UN and civil society alike. Considering the implications on human rights and development, gender equality should not only be a goal of the sustainable development agenda, but is necessary in order for sustainable development to become a reality.⁸⁷ Women's empowerment, particularly in economic roles, will continue to be discussed through the theme of the upcoming ECOSOC Integration Segment on 30 March 2015, “achieving sustainable development through employment creation and decent work for all.”⁸⁸

⁸¹ UN Human Rights Council, *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women's human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda (A/HRC/27/73)*, 2014.

⁸² UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)*, 2014.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (A/RES/69/15)*, 2014.

⁸⁴ Women's Major Group, *Women Major Group Response to the SG's Synthesis Report: "The Road to Dignity by 2030,"* 2014.

⁸⁵ SESRIC, *Regional Workshop on 'Integrating a Gender Perspective in the Production of Statistics,'* 2014; UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)*, 2014; UN Human Rights Council, *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women's human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda (A/HRC/27/73)*, 2014; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*, 2014.

⁸⁶ SESRIC, *Regional Workshop on 'Integrating a Gender Perspective in the Production of Statistics,'* 2014; UN General Assembly, *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)*, 2014; UN Human Rights Council, *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women's human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda (A/HRC/27/73)*, 2014.

⁸⁷ UN Human Rights Council, *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women's human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda (A/HRC/27/73)*, 2014.

⁸⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Meeting and Events of ECOSOC and its Subsidiary Bodies: ECOSOC Integration Segment*, 2015; UN Commission on the Status of Women, *Letter dated 19 December 2014 from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women (E/CN.6/2015/7)*, 2014.

Annotated Bibliography

Chambers, V. and C. Cummings. (2014). *Building momentum: women's empowerment in Tunisia*. Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved 25 January 2015 from: <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9291.pdf>

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is an independent organization devoted to policies on international development humanitarian issues. This report reviews the effects of 20 years of Tunisian policies on women's increased participation in education and political positions. Delegates should review this report, as well as related reports by ODI, to consider how such policies can be enacted in other areas that are affected by the same issues.

United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, Fifty-ninth session. (2014). *Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly: Report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/2015/3)*. Retrieved 8 February 2015 from: <http://www.unwomen.org/~media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/59/ecn620153.pdf>

The Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 was the origin of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) posed a 5-year review of implementation efforts. At the request of ECOSOC, the Secretary-General (SG) has been issuing annual reports to follow up on the agreements from these meetings since 2006. The most recent SG report is an excellent summary of work at the national and regional levels to achieve the Platform for Action's objectives across many areas of concern. Delegates should review the progress and identified shortcomings of past and current initiatives as well as the SG's recommendations for future improvements in order to develop their own strategies to present to fellow delegates at the conference.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (A/RES/69/15)* [Resolution]. Retrieved 24 January 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/69/15>

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and are therefore some of the strongest advocates for sustainable development. This document contains agreements from the Third International Conference of SIDS on crosscutting development issues in the environmental, economic, and health fields. Delegates should consider the commitments made here in future references to policymaking, as well as note the role of UN agencies requested to support implementation.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2014). *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet (A/69/700)* [Report]. Retrieved 10 January 2015 from: <http://undocs.org/A/69/700>

In preparation for the adoption of a new post-2015 development agenda, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General (SG) to synthesize lessons learned from past development work along with contributions by Member States, civil society, and individuals through various regional and internet-based platforms. Delegates should review the challenges and recommendations posed by the SG in the present report to identify areas of primary concern for their delegations, particularly noting areas where gender equality can be more strongly integrated into the development agenda.

United Nations, Human Rights Council, Twenty-seventh session. (2014). *Summary report on the recommendations of the panel discussion on gender stereotyping and on women's human rights in the context of sustainable development agenda (A/HRC/27/73)*. Retrieved 23 December 2014 from: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/27/73>

The issue of gender equality is grounded in human rights, and the Human Rights Council (HRC) consequently plays a large role in monitoring progress. This report contains both very specific success stories and unmet needs regarding the protection of women's human rights and their empowerment in development. Delegates should apply special attention to comments on the shortcomings of the MDGs in order to frame the upcoming SDGs with a focus on feasible implementation.

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III. Promoting Social and Economic Integration through Sustainable Urbanization

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) is committed to achieving a “new urban agenda” to promote social and economic integration through sustainable urbanization.⁸⁹ This topic addresses one of the primary problems to obtaining greater economic success at its roots, paving the way for other development goals including the eradication of poverty, access to water, sanitation, health and education.⁹⁰ With the cooperation of supportive governments, businesses, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, the path to sustainable urbanization can be unlocked and further progress can be secured.⁹¹

This topic was the central theme of many discussions during the 69th Session of the General Assembly (GA). Some of the resolutions adopted were a reaffirmation of past and ongoing commitments to sustainable development (A/RES/69/214), including Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which will be discussed again at the 70th session, as well as resolution 69/215 “International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Life’, 2005-2015 and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources.”⁹²

Various UN entities have been instrumental in discussing this topic in recent months, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Habitat and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).⁹³ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) remains influential in streamlining the integration of this topic throughout the sustainable development agenda through General Assembly resolution 61/16 and *The Future We Want* document.⁹⁴ More recently, ECOSOC’s work is guided by two reports: “World Economic and Social Survey 2014: Reducing Inequality for Sustainable Development” (E/2014/50) and the Secretary-General’s report on “effective governance, policymaking and planning for sustainable urbanization” (E/2014/67).⁹⁵

Relevant international instruments include *Agenda 21*, the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* (2000), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (1994) and the report “Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing” (2012).⁹⁶ Preparations are also ongoing for the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016 (Habitat III), which could be pivotal in setting standards for the “new urban agenda.”⁹⁷ The first preparatory committee meeting (PrepCom) was held on 17 September 2014.⁹⁸ Other recent events include the Expert Group Meeting and Capacity-building Workshop on the

⁸⁹ UN DPI, *On World Habitat Day, UN calls for ‘new urban agenda,’* 2014.

⁹⁰ ICTSD, *UN Secretary-General issues guidance to post-2015 development agenda process,* 2014.

⁹¹ UN-Habitat, *Message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on World Habitat Day on 6 October 2014, in New York,* 2014.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/RES/69/214),* 2014; UN General Assembly, *International Decade for Action, ‘Water for Life’, 2005-2015 and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources (A/RES/69/215),* 2014.

⁹³ UN DESA, *Cooperatives,* 2014; IISD, *UNGA Completes 20-year Review of ICPD,* 2014; UN-Habitat, *Participatory Slum Upgrading Project (PSUP),* 2014; UN-Habitat, *Slum Upgrading is all the rage in Kenya’s Kilifi county,* 2014; UN-Habitat, *Message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on World Habitat Day on 6 October 2014, in New York,* 2014.

⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council,* 2007; UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288),* 2012.

⁹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *World Economic and Social Survey 2014: Reducing Inequality for Sustainable Development- Overview (E/2014/50),* 2014; UN ECOSOC, *Effective governance, policymaking and planning for sustainable urbanization: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2014/67),* 2014.

⁹⁶ UN DESA, *Agenda 21,* 2014; UNFPA, *Programme of Action Adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development Cairo, 5-13 September 1994,* 2014; UN General Assembly, *Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing: A Note of the Secretary-General (A/66/700),* 2012; UN General Assembly, *United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2),* 2000.

⁹⁷ UCLG, *Habitat III,* 2015.

⁹⁸ UN-Habitat, *Habitat III,* 2014.

Role of Cooperatives in Sustainable Development in December 2014 and the Workshop on Developing Government and Governance Capacities for Sustainable Development of October 2014.⁹⁹

Recent Developments

Slum Poverty

To emphasize the urgency in addressing slum poverty, this year's World Habitat Day on 6 October 2014 was themed "Voices from the Slums."¹⁰⁰ UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for the inclusion of slum dwellers in discussions on how their living conditions could be improved, and also encouraged the use of technology to help build economically, socially and environmentally sustainable cities through local solutions.¹⁰¹ As part of this initiative, individuals contributed direct suggestions and problems to urban forums, allowing policymakers to ensure that national strategies effectively address the needs of the people while maintaining links with the issue's implementation on a global scale.¹⁰²

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Joan Clos, prioritized affordable housing at the center of city planning and development, with the belief that it will contribute to improving living conditions and addressing housing shortages.¹⁰³ Recent discussions on the issue of housing suggest modifying land policies, streamlining construction processes, improving energy efficiency and increasing inclusivity of the poor.¹⁰⁴ Through local initiatives, the greater problem of housing can be resolved and can be used in other impending issues including access to sanitary water.

Water and Sanitation

The My World Report, "We The Peoples: Celebrating 7 Million People" (2014), highlighted access to clean water and sanitation as a top priority for over seven million people.¹⁰⁵ In line with this, water and sanitation have been key themes in the recent work of UN-Habitat, where projects with local partners have provided safe water to 10,000 people through the establishment of water management committees, training for management, hygiene awareness, and infrastructure development.¹⁰⁶ Various publications have been released, emphasizing the importance of transparency in information available to the public and of community involvement in projects to ensure implementation.¹⁰⁷

Inclusive employment opportunities

Access to education is increasingly being seen as the key to stabilizing employment opportunities.¹⁰⁸ A recent International Labour Organization (ILO) publication illustrated that higher education is necessary for those who are unable to find jobs.¹⁰⁹ For young people in low-income countries, where one in four have no access to education at all, education must be improved to ensure they obtain the qualifications required to work.¹¹⁰ The post-2015 development agenda focuses on improving the quality of education, making education more accessible, creating wider apprenticeship and internship programmes and encouraging government to create a wider workforce.¹¹¹ By engaging national governments, providing training and improving the quality of education, individuals can obtain more fulfilling jobs, leading to greater economic prosperity for them and subsequent generations.

⁹⁹ UN DESA, *Calendar of DESA Events*, 2014; UNPAN, *Developing Government and Governance Capacities for Sustainable Development*, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ UN News Centre, *On World Habitat Day, UN calls for 'new urban agenda'*, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² UN-Habitat, *National Urban Forums*, 2014; UN-Habitat, *Nigeria and Cameroon hold premier National Urban Forums*, 2014.

¹⁰³ UN-Habitat, *Affordable housing should be "at the centre of cities": Joan Clos*, 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid; UN-Habitat, *Expert meeting in Barcelona analyses affordable and inclusive housing finance for all*, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ UN, *We The Peoples: Celebrating 7 Million Voices*, 2014, p. 48-49.

¹⁰⁶ UN-Habitat, *Two South Sudan counties benefit from UN-Habitat water project*, 2014.

¹⁰⁷ UN-Habitat, *Kibera: Integrated Water Sanitation and Waste Management Project*, 2014; UNOHCHR, *Realizing the human rights to water and sanitation: A Handbook*, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ UN News Centre, *In developing world, higher education key to stable employment, says new UN report*, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ ILO, *Is education the solution to decent work for youth in developing economies?*, 2014.

¹¹⁰ ILO, *Lack of higher education leaves millions of young people out of decent work in developing countries*, 2014; UN News Centre, *In developing world, higher education key to stable employment, says new UN report*, 2014.

¹¹¹ UN General Assembly, *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet (A/69/700)*, 2014.

Conclusion

ECOSOC has been instrumental in facilitating initiatives to address the underlying issues of this topic. With the dedication of the 2014 World Habitat Day to “Voices from the Slums,” the UN is moving closer to engaging all areas of society to develop sustainable solutions. It is crucial to address the continually rising population demands before irreversible consequences occur, particularly in vulnerable urban locations. Whilst the future post-2015 development framework shows promise in promoting social and economic integration, with key goals focused on alleviating poverty and reducing inequalities worldwide, policies must be effective and enforced at the local level to ensure success of the SDGs.

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This resource provides valuable information on the World Habitat Day, 2014, which was themed 'Voices from the Slums,' and is highly relevant to this topic. Delegates should use this source to understand some of the impending issues surrounding urbanization and the active roles and events participating countries have played in raising and addressing this topic. Delegates should consider how this particular event managed to engage people worldwide successfully and how these methods can be used again in future initiatives.

United Nations. (2014). *The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet* [Report]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/reports/SG_Synthesis_Report_Road_to_Dignity_by_2030.pdf

The Secretary-General's recent synthesis report is the middle road between the proposed Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. This source is important for delegates to fully appreciate the priorities in the future development framework, many of which tie into this topic as part of the overall emphasis on sustainable development. Delegates should use this report as guidance to understand the direction and key principles of the UN's agenda heading into the next decade.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2014) *Realizing the human rights to water and sanitation: A Handbook*. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from:

www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/WaterAndSanitation/SRWater/Pages/Handbook.aspx

The Human Rights Council (HRC) established the post of Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation through HRC resolution 16/2 (2011). This handbook, published by the previous Special Rapporteur, is fundamental in redefining a human rights-based approach to water and sanitation and outlines methods of monitoring and implementing safe and sanitary access to water. Delegates should consider this handbook when exploring the various options for creating accountability mechanisms with sustainable urbanization projects.

International Labour Organization. (2014). *Lack of higher education leaves millions of young people out of decent work in developing countries* [Article]. Retrieved 7 January 2015 from: http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_329108/lang--en/index.htm

This article highlights the link between education and employment in developing countries and is key to understanding how the resolution of a root problem can lead to a plethora of successful developments and liberation. Delegates must be aware of the importance of securing decent education facilities on wider social and economic opportunities. This is an excellent source for delegates to generate ideas on how to connect the two and apply this to integrating society and the economy through urbanization.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2014). *Nigeria and Cameroon hold premier National Urban Forums* [Website]. Retrieved 6 January 2015 from: <http://unhabitat.org/at-the-first-national-urban-forum-nigeria-promises-faster-slum-upgrading/>

In order to uphold the vision of a multi-stakeholder process for urbanization, National Urban Forums (NUFs) provide a local platform for dialogue between all sectors of society. Outcomes of NUFs are not only informative for developing national policies, but can subsequently contribute to the sharing of best practices in the global development framework. This source provides delegates with a firsthand encounter on how such UN initiatives and projects are successful in engaging a country's government, agencies and population specifically in the context of urban policy reform.

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