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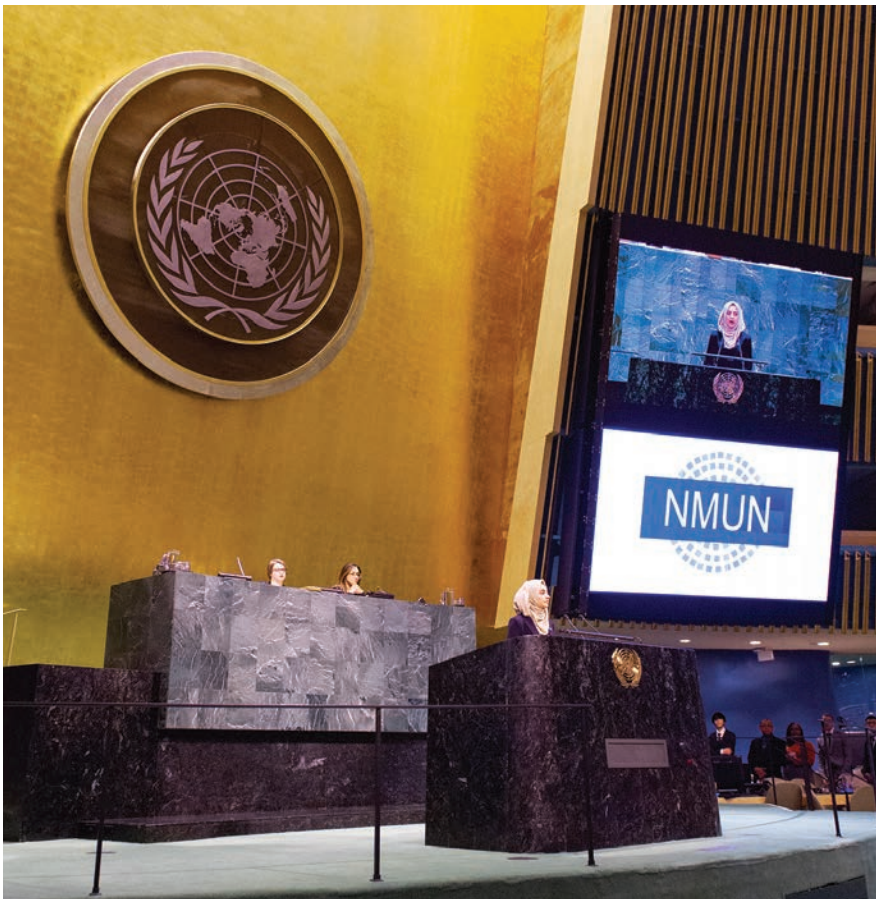
United Nations Development Programme
Background Guide 2021

Written and updated by: Alexandra Bogdasarow and Yasmine Sabek, Directors
Harrison Baile, Assistant Director



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2021 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This year's staff is: Directors Alexandra Bogdasarow (Conference A) and Yasmine Sabek (Conference B). Alexandra has a BA in Political Science and Chinese Studies and is now pursuing a MA in Organisation of Social Issues at the University of Trier. She currently works as research assistant at the Confucius-Institute of the University of Trier. Yasmine is an Egyptian architect who graduated from the American University in Cairo, now working at UN Habitat.

The topics under discussion for United Nations Development Programme are:

I. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Water and Ocean Governance
II. Closing the Energy Gap for All People

As one of the United Nations' operational programs, UNDP is directly involved on the ground in over 170 countries, in order to help implement policies within its three main pillars: sustainable development, democratic governance and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience. In this context, UNDP works to promote and advance the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With a focus on sustainable development, UNDP helps countries develop policies, leadership skills, partnering abilities, institutional capabilities, and build resilience. Currently, UNDP is focused on three broad development contexts for its Strategic Plan (2018-2021): eradicate poverty in all forms and dimensions, accelerate structural transformations, and build resilience to shocks and crises. In order to accurately stimulate the committee, it will be critical for delegates to understand UNDP's role in coordinating and funding development initiatives around the world.

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 Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2021 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, that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. NMUN Rules of Procedure - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory NMUN Conduct Expectations on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Development Department, Lauren Kiser (Conference A) and Max Lacey (Conference B), at usg.dev@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,

Conference A
Alexandra Bogdasarow, *Director*

Conference B
Yasmine Sabek, *Director*

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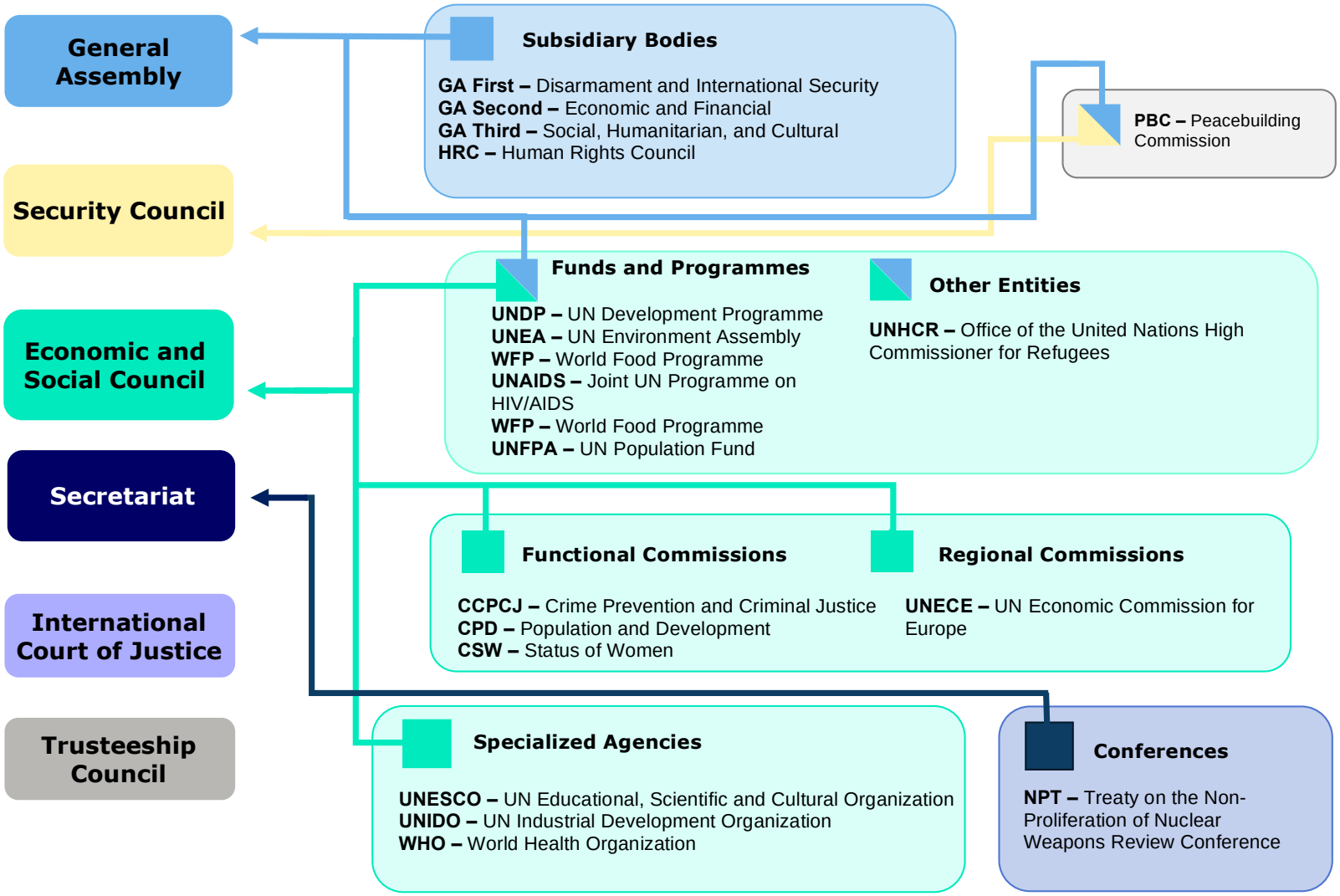
United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates 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 UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) embodies Article 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which outlines the organization's responsibility to promote "higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development," as prerequisites to peace.[1] Originally, development activities of the United Nations (UN) consisted largely of providing technical advice through the UN Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA) and support for pre-investment projects through the UN Special Fund, created in 1949 and 1958 respectively, for the benefit of less developed countries.[2] To streamline these assistance programs, General Assembly resolution 2029 (XX) of 22 November 1965 consolidated the EPTA and the UN Special Fund to establish UNDP as of 1 January 1966.[3] Today, as the leader of the UN's "global development network," UNDP assists countries with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).[4]

At NMUN•NY 2021, we are simulating the **Executive Board of UNDP** in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board, as a budgetary and administrative body, during the Conference. For the purposes of NMUN•NY 2021, and corresponding with the educational mission of the Conference, the committee has the ability to make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNDP in line with the overall function of the organization.

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UNDP leadership comprises of an Administrator and an Executive Board.[5] The Administrator is appointed by the Secretary-General and confirmed by the General Assembly for a four-year term.[6] The Administrator leads a large team in Regional Bureaus and provides support to other Bureaus, such as the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and the Crisis Bureau, to carry out UNDP's programs.[7]

On the other hand, the Executive Board oversees all of UNDP's projects, approves budgets and ensures that projects adapt to changing situations and the unique needs of each country while following policy guidance provided by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[8] It consists of 36 rotating Member States from five geographic groups: eight from the group of African states, seven from the group of Asian and Pacific states, four from the group of Eastern European states, five from the group of Latin America and the Caribbean states, and twelve from the group of Western European and Other states.[9] Members typically serve three-year terms and are elected by ECOSOC, although the group of Western European and Other States instead decides on its rotation internally.[10]

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[1] UNDP JPO Service Centre, *UNDP for Beginners: A Beginner's Guide to the United Nations Development Programme*, 2015, p. 4; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Art. 55.
[2] UN General Assembly, *Expanded programme of technical assistance for economic development of under-developed countries (A/RES/304 (IV))*, 1949; UN General Assembly, *Establishment of the Special Fund (A/RES/1240 (XIII))*, 1958.
[3] UN General Assembly, *Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX))*, 1965.
[4] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2019, p. 251; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UNDG, *The Sustainable Development Goals Are Coming to Life*, 2016.
[5] UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2020.
[6] UNDP, *About us: Our leadership*, 2020.
[7] UNDP, *2020 Organizational Chart*, 2020.
[8] UNDP, *Executive Board*, 2020.
[9] UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP*, *UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2020.
[10] Ibid.

The Executive Board holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.[11] The Executive Board is under the authority of ECOSOC and reports annually on its program of work and recommendations for field-level improvement.[12] The rules of procedure for the Executive Board aim for decision-making by consensus, but where a vote is needed, the rules of procedure for ECOSOC are used.[13] The Executive Board also serves as the governing body of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS).[14]

The Bureau of the Executive Board is responsible for the organization and preparation of meetings, and it supports transparency and dialogue in the decision-making of the Executive Board by organizing and coordinating meetings and selecting teams for field visits.[15] The Bureau is comprised of one President and four Vice-Presidents, who are elected annually at the first regular session according to geographic regions to ensure equality.[16] The Presidency for 2020 is held by H.E. Mr. Walton Webson, permanent representative of Antigua and Barbuda to the United Nations.[17] The Vice-Presidents for 2020 are from Bulgaria, Sweden, Rwanda and Kuwait.[18]

UNDP obtains funding from Member States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other sources, contributing approximately USD 5 billion annually, with the Executive Board deciding on budgets and financial plans.[19] Additional funding for individual projects and activities may be provided directly by organizations and governments, although UNDP remains the primary source of funding.[20] With projects in over 170 countries, UNDP tracks allocation of its budget according to themes such as inclusive and sustainable growth, basic services, recovery, and risk reduction among others.[21]

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 2029 (XX) of 22 November 1965, UNDP retained the "principles, procedures and provisions" of the EPTA and the UN Special Fund following their consolidation.[22] Having broadened in scope, UNDP's present mandate is "to empower lives and build resilient nations" for sustainable human development.[23] As an assistance program, UNDP is "designed to support and supplement the national efforts of developing countries in solving the most important problems of their economic development, including industrial development."[24] General Assembly resolution 59/250 (2005) emphasizes that national governments still retain primary responsibility for development within their countries.[25]

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[11] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2019, p. 251.
[12] UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2020.
[13] Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Rules of Procedure of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, of the United Nations Population Fund and of the United Nations Office for Project Services (DP/2011/18)*, 2011.
[14] UNDP, *Information note about the Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS*, 2020.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] UNDP, *Executive Board*, 2020.
[18] Ibid.
[19] UNDP, *Our funding: Overview*, 2020; UNDP, *Our funding: UNDP's funding channels*, 2020.
[20] UNDP, *UNDP Transparency Portal*, 2020.
[21] Ibid.
[22] UN General Assembly, *Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX))*, 1965.
[23] UNDP JPO Service Centre, *UNDP for Beginners: A Beginner's Guide to the United Nations Development Programme*, 2015, p. 4.
[24] UN General Assembly, *Consolidation of the Special Fund and the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance in a United Nations Development Programme (A/RES/2029 (XX))*, 1965.
[25] UN General Assembly, *Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/RES/59/250)*, 2005, p. 3.

UNDP does not adopt resolutions, instead its work is carried out by its offices in different countries, which are focused on helping countries develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and the reduction of inequalities.[26] To assist in these efforts, UNDP also administers and utilizes the UN Volunteers program and the UN Capital Development Fund.[27] Partnerships are crucial to the work of UNDP as they enable UNDP to finance its various activities and implement projects.[28]

As the leading UN development agency, a core function of UNDP's role is assisting Member States in achieving the SDGs.[29] Through its Strategic Plan 2018-2021, UNDP contextualizes its work towards achieving the SDGs around three broad settings: eradicating poverty in all its forms, accelerating structural transformations, and building resilience to crises and shocks.[30] It then directs its work towards its "Signature Solutions": eradicating poverty, governance for peaceful, just and inclusive cities, increased resilience, nature-based solutions for the environment, clean affordable energy and gender quality.[31]

UNDP's assistance to Member States is also guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group's (UNSDG) common approach to implementing the SDGs, called MAPS: Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support.[32] The UNSDG is the highest-level inter-agency forum for the UN development system and comprises all UN entities whose work relates to the 2030 Agenda at the country level.[33] It provides strategic direction and oversight to ensure the UN development system delivers coherent, effective, and efficient support to countries seeking to achieve sustainable development."[34] The goal of the MAPS approach is to encourage Member States to translate the SDGs into action.[35] MAPS has already achieved results, chief among them enabling countries to effectively use data for SDG implementation and monitoring, and ensuring SDG ownership across different stakeholders.[36]

Apart from playing an important role within the UNSDG, UNDP also manages the Resident Coordinator system, which provides guidance and support for operational activities for development carried out by UN entities at the country level.[37] As of November 2016, there were 129 Resident Coordinators leading 131 UN country teams.[38]

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

UNDP remains wholly committed to achieving the SDGs by 2030 and plans to achieve them through sustainable means and actions.[39] UNDP's Executive Board met in June 2020 to review the progress of UNDP's Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and reflect upon the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the development landscape.[40] COVID-19 has caused a disruption in attaining the targets of the SDGs, exposing many already existing crises within our communities, but also showcasing the inherit importance of the SDGs.[41] Global human development has been estimated to fall in 2020 for the first time

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[26] UNDP, *About us: Overview*, 2020.
[27] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2019, p. 251.
[28] UNDP, *Our partners: Overview*, 2020.
[29] UNDP, *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2020.
[30] UNDP, *Three development settings*, 2020.
[31] UNDP, *About us, Looking to the Future*, 2020.
[32] UNDP, *SDGs in Action*, 2017.
[33] New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2019, p. 249.
[34] Ibid., p. 250; UNDP, *Our partners: Overview*, 2018.
[35] UNDP, *SDGs in Action*, 2017.
[36] Ibid.
[37] UN DOCO, *The UN Resident Coordinator system – an overview*, 2016.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Executive Board, Recent sessions*, 2019.
[40] Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Report of the Annual Session 2020,* 2020.
[41] UNDP, *COVID-19 and the SDGs*, 2020.

since 1990, when measurements were first taken.[42] The pandemic has caused the world to view health, education, income inequality, and city resilience through a new lens and, as such, UNDP is committed to help decision makers with their COVID-19 responses to manage uncertainty and ensure a better quality of life for all.[43] UNDP has refocused its efforts by swiftly deploying resources and funds through the Rapid Response Facility and repurposing existing resources in 90 country offices.[44] UNDP has also joined forces with five other UN agencies, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) to provide improved strategic direction to Member States.[45]

As the UN's technical lead on socio-economic recovery, UNDP's first response phase aims at helping countries respond urgently and effectively to COVID-19.[46] This response includes an integrated "Prepare, Respond, Recover" approach to COVID-19 with a focus on health systems support, multi-sectoral crisis management, and socio-economic impact assessment and response.[47] The second phase of the COVID-19 response is designed to help Member States look beyond instant recovery and crisis mitigation and towards the 2030 Agenda, specifically in governance, social protection, green economy and digital disruption.[48]

Conclusion

The UNDP Executive Board's position atop three organizations, UNDP, UNFPA, and UNOPS, as well as its cooperative function with UNSDG, uniquely situates it to further development on all levels. With a wide range of working areas including poverty reduction, crisis prevention, democratic governance, environmental protection, and human rights, UNDP can target the most important aspects for sustainable and equal human development with innovative strategies outlined in the Strategic Plan 2018-2021.[49] UNDP continues to work toward enhancing effective and inclusive democratic governance, strengthening resilience, eradicating poverty, and reducing inequalities and does so by working both bilaterally and multilaterally, achieving the SDGs.[50] UNDP continues to take the necessary measures to aid the international community in its goal of achieving the SDGs, even as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have challenged the development landscape. UNDP also remains poised to play a significant role in responding to and assisting governments in mitigating the effects of COVID-19.[51]

Annotated Bibliography

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> *The UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 gives delegates a good insight into the work that UNDP plans on accomplishing for the next two years. This four-year plan details out UNDP's specific priorities, strategies, and work methods, offering up the challenges which UNDP will face. It specifically explains the approach UNDP must take to help countries achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. (2020). *Annual Session of the Executive Board 2020.*

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] UNDP, *Speech at the Second Regular Session of UNDP Executive Board*, 2020.
[45] Ibid.
[46] UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, 2020.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 (DP/2017/38)*, 2017.
[50] Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, *Executive Board, Recent sessions*, 2019.
[51] UNDP, *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030*, 2020.

Retrieved 21 September 2020 from: https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2020/annual-session-of-the-undp-executive-board.html

Held annually to allow the Executive Board of UNDP to assess the work done, this document is a broad, and excellent overview of what was discussed. This year specifically showcased how the SDGs have clearly defined and shaped what UNDP's scope of work will be going forward, alongside its Strategic Plan (2018-2021) to addressing and tackling the SDGs, addressing UNDP's yearly work on poverty, and the achievements that had been made on the Strategic Plan. It specifically highlighted the importance of the SDGs to battle COVID-19, and how UNDP can respond to the global pandemic.

New Zealand, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. (2019). *United Nations Handbook 2019-20.* Retrieved 31 October 2020 from: https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Peace-Rights-and-Security/Our-work-with-the-UN/UN-Handbook-2019-20.pdf

This handbook provides information not only on UNDP, but also on the complete organization of the UN. Delegates can find basic information about all programs, committees, and funds within the UN system, including a quick overview of UNDP. Furthermore, it provides information on the role of UNDP within the UN system and gives the vital organizational structure to help delegates understand the role of UNDP within the United Nation's system.

United Nations Development Programme, Junior Professional Officer Service Centre. (2015). *UNDP for Beginners: A Beginner's Guide to the United Nations Development Programme*. Retrieved 21 September 2020 from: http://www.undp.org/content/dam/jposc/docs/Recruitment-documents/UNDP%20for%20Beginners%20-%205%20edition%20-%20May%202015.pdf

This guide is a comprehensive introduction to UNDP that explains key aspects such as its structure, development, and function. Furthermore, basic questions such as what UNDP does, what its internal entities do, principles of UNDP, and funding sources are discussed and explained. This is a great starting point for delegates to gather basic information about the operations and organization of UNDP before dealing with more specific topics.

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I. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Water and Ocean Governance

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that two thirds of the world's population experiences water scarcity for at least one month of the year, whilst approximately 2 billion people access an "unsafely managed water supply system."[52] Ocean degradation has led to 80% of fish stocks being overexploited, ocean acidity increased by 30% over the last 50 years, and 10-20 million tons of plastic enter the ocean's ecosystem every year, negatively impacting marine ecosystems.[53] Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 6 (clean water and sanitation) and 14 (life below water) of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) recognize the destruction of oceans and push for its preservation as people depend on it for livelihoods and food.[54] Oceans also harbor an ecosystem of rich biodiversity essential for sustainable development of the world.[55]

To tackle these challenges, UNDP's Water and Ocean Governance Programme (WOGP) report of 2017 deemed water and ocean governance as crucial areas to improve the sustainable development and management of ocean resources.[56] Ocean governance has four main dimensions: political, social, economic, and administrative systems.[57] The World Ocean Council defines ocean governance as "the foundation of rules, institutions, processes, agreements and arrangements based on which economic activities are undertaken."[58] Effective global governance requires Member States to address ongoing, emerging, and transnational challenges of ocean resources.[59] A central challenge to ocean governance is assessing the transboundary nature of marine resources, such as the movement and impact of water beyond political boundaries, and threats to its sustainability.[60]

Generally, ocean governance focuses on ecosystem preservation, coastal management, public literacy, and resource management.[61] Due to the transboundary nature of oceanic and water resources, the enforcement of these are not standardized as it includes multiple stakeholders and sectors.[62] Consequently, the lack of consensus by the international community on the scope of ocean governance, and the emerging complexity of marine technology, poses challenges.[63] The overall focus of UNDP has been a bottom-up approach, which highlights the importance of learning from local knowledge and scaling it up to national policies, multilateral agreements, and international partnerships.[64]

Transboundary water governance is of equal importance to ocean governance as it addresses the governance of inland water sources that cross international borders.[65] The *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes* defines transboundary water sources as "(…) any surface or ground waters which mark, cross or are located on boundaries between two or

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[52] UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2017.
[53] Ibid.
[54] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.
[55] UN DGC, *Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources*.
[56] UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2017.
[57] UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019.
[58] World Ocean Council, *Ocean Governance and the Private Sector*, 2018.
[59] UN DESA, *Global governance and global rules for development in the post-2015 era*, 2014, p. 52.
[60] UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019, p. 14.
[61] OceanGov, *Ocean Governance for Sustainability – Challenges, Options and the Role of Science*, 2018.
[62] UNESCO, *Step-by-Step Approach for Marine Spatial Planning toward Ecosystem-based Management*, 2009, pp. 18-42.
[63] UNESCO, *Step-by-Step Approach for Marine Spatial Planning toward Ecosystem-based Management*, 2009, p. 71.
[64] UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14*, 2016.
[65] UNECE, *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*, 1992.

more States (…)."[66] The convention further clarifies that transboundary waterways end where they meet open bodies of water, such as a sea.[67] Transboundary water governance is a vital part of achieving the SDGs, such as SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG 14 (life below water), and non-water focused SDGs, such as SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities).[68] Transboundary water governance can further assist in achieving SDG targets 11.5 and 9.1, both focused on water related disasters and transboundary infrastructure respectively.[69]

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a small positive impact on the oceans according to UNDP.[70] Reductions in the demand of sea life for food, reductions in the amount of shipping, and significant decrease in the global tourism and cruise industry has led to a decrease in ocean pollution and acidification for 2020.[71] However, UNDP warns that the short-term environmental gains are unlikely to be sustained once pre-pandemic levels of development continues.[72]

International and Regional Framework

The 1982 treaty on the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) was the first international convention that outlined comprehensive rights and obligations for ocean usage and shared water resources.[73] Article 137 specifically defines oceans and seas as a "common heritage" on which no state can claim sole sovereignty and is a principle of the international law that should be held in trust for the future.[74] In 1992, the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* acknowledged the need to sustainably manage ocean warming, acidification, deoxygenation, and address the special threats to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the face of climate change.[75] In 2012, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development was foundational in defining ocean governance and its institutional challenges.[76] Its outcome document, *The Future We Want*, emphasized the importance of preserving oceans as a "common heritage" by including all ocean-related stakeholders.[77]

In 2017, the UN Ocean Conference met to identify actions to realize the goals of SDG 14, along with strengthening existing partnerships to advance the targets of SDG 14.[78] The conference generated 1,568 voluntary commitments from multiple stakeholders and Member States towards ocean conservation.[79] This resulted in General Assembly resolution 71/312 of 2017, "Our ocean, our future", which recognized the need for area-based management tools (ABMTs) as a tool to manage the transboundary challenges of oceans.[80] Another outcome of the conference was to highlight the importance of addressing special policy gaps faced by SIDS, landlocked developing countries and the least developed countries (LDCs).[81] These gaps include the lack of scientific knowledge, expansion of

[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid.
[68] UNECE, *Introduction: About the UNECE Water Convention*, 2020.
[69] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.
[70] UNDP, *The ocean and COVID-19*, 2020.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.
[73] UNCLOS III, *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982.
[74] Ibid.p. 70.
[75] UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.
[76] UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.
[77] Ibid.
[78] UN Ocean Conference, *About the UN Ocean Conference 2017*, 2017.
[79] Ibid.
[80] UN General Assembly, *Our Ocean*, *Our Future: Call for Action (A/RES/71/312)*, 2017.
[81] UN Ocean Conference, *Partnership Dialogue 7: Enhancing the Conservation and Sustainable use of Oceans and Their Resources by Implementing International law as Reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 2017.

research capacity, and transfer of marine technology to better deal with developmental challenges faced by Member States.[82]

Given the differing needs of Member States, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) calls for ecosystem-based marine and coastal management to be integrated at all levels of administration.[83] For example, the *Bucharest Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution* (1992) aimed at establishing legal protocols on ocean pollution.[84] Other notable conventions include the *Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic* (1992) which assessed the overall quality of the Atlantic Ocean's marine environment.[85] *The Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission* (1992*)* produced recommendations for aquaculture and small-scale fisheries.[86] *The Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region* (1994) called for the "wise use, development and management of the coastal and marine environment" for long-term benefits.[87] Most recently, frameworks such as the *Ocean Governance Strategy for Africa* (2018) and *Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050* aim at the efficient application of ecosystem-based management, and raising awareness through education.[88]

The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes* is a foundational document for both the inland and transboundary waterways within Europe and the international community.[89] In 2016, the convention opened up to non-European parties, making it an international convention, with Chad and Senegal joining in 2018.[90] While it focuses on limiting transboundary waterway impacts, article 15 of the convention calls for the mutual assistance between parties regarding transboundary waterways.[91] Furthermore, article 9 calls for the creation of bilateral and multilateral cooperation on transboundary waterways and lays the framework for possible cooperation between parties regarding development related to transboundary waterways.[92]

Role of the International System

Currently, a primary focus of UNDP includes water and ocean governance and the promotion of marine management practices.[93] UNDP WOGP, launched in 2008, is UNDP's main global mechanism to collect data and coordinate programs around ocean governance.[94] UNDP WOGP collaborates with other organizations, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Stockholm International Water Institute, and Global Water Partnership, on projects ranging from governance, advocacy, and leadership to sanitation and hygiene.[95] In particular, GEF is the largest financial institution with USD 7.7 billion in co-

[82] Partnership for Regional Ocean Governance, *The Role of Regional Ocean Governance in Implementing Sustainable Development Goal 14*, 2017, p. 39.
[83] UN Environment, *Taking Steps Toward Marine and Coastal Ecosystem-Based Management*, 2011, pp. 9-18.
[84] Black Sea Commission, *The Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution*, 1992.
[85] OSPAR Commission, *The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic*, 1992.
[86] HELCOM, *The Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic sea area*, 1992.
[87] UN Environment, *NOWPAP History*.
[88] UN Environment, *Development of Ocean Governance Strategy for Africa: Summary of Scoping Study and Gap Analysis*, 2018; African Union, *2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (2050 AIM Strategy)*, 2012.
[89] UNECE, *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*, 1992.
[90] UNECE*, Introduction: About the UNECE Water Convention*, 2020.
[91] UNECE, *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*, 1992.
[92] UNECE, *Introduction: About the UNECE Water Convention*, 2020.
[93] UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2017.
[94] UNDP, *Water & Oceans Governance Programme Contribution to Realizing the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-2017*, 2014, p. 11.
[95] UNDP, *Water and Ocean Governance*, 2020.

financing contribution to marine preservation and coastal management.[96] GEF harnesses regional knowledge and uses innovative financial models to reduce the cost of management, optimize the usage of resources, and invest in the health of oceans.[97] Another example is Cap-Net UNDP, which has been instrumental in fostering local ownership of sustainable development by establishing monitoring and reporting systems.[98]

UNDP collaborates with a wide variety of actors within the UN system in this area.[99] These partnerships are coordinated by UN-Water, the UN's inter-agency mechanism for all water and ocean-related matters.[100] In 2011, a multi-stakeholder approach was formalized by IOC-UNESCO, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and UNDP.[101] The approach focused on analyzing current challenges in coastal management and ways to improve the provisions on the Law of the Sea Convention.[102]

Similarly, the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) developed the Sustainable Development of Coastal Areas framework (SDCA) for Integrated Coastal Management.[103] SDCA supports cross-sectoral coordination by continuously exploring emerging issues in coastal sustainable development that affects different levels of integration.[104] Commercial interests derived from oceanic resources have been recognized as resulting in a high environmental cost.[105] To reverse this, recent international frameworks have focused on utilizing scientific knowledge, developing financial networks for effective policy, and coordinating stakeholder engagement.[106] These focus areas use multiple management tools for political, legal and institutional reforms.[107] Tools such as the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme identify ecological challenges that are transboundary in nature and aims to coordinate initiatives between Member States.[108]

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) are also critical actors in achieving the 2030 Agenda.[109] For example, The Wildlife Conservation Society Marine Protected Area Fund (WCS MPA Fund) aims to invest a minimum of USD 15 million by 2020 to scale local initiatives upwards to develop regional networks and global strategies for conserving the marine and biological ecosystem.[110] A progress report on this initiative was due in July 2020, with the initiative being completed by December 2020.[111] As of late 2020, this report has not been submitted.[112] Recently, WCS MPA Fund's contribution to marine spatial planning for Gabon Bleu in 2012 led to similar efforts in Equatorial Guinea

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[96] GEF et al., *From Coast to Coast: Celebrating 20 Years of Transboundary Management of Our Shared Oceans*, 2019.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Cap-Net & UNDP, *About Us*, 2019.
[99] UN-Water, *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*.
[100] Ibid.
[101] UNESCO, *A Blueprint for Ocean and Coast Sustainability*, 2011.
[102] UNESCO, *A Blueprint for Ocean and Coast Sustainability*, 2011.
[103] PEMSEA, *Understanding Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) —Model Course on ICM. Instructor's Manual*, 2018, pp. 38-52.
[104] UNDP, *Catalysing Ocean Finance*, *Volume I: Transforming Markets to Restore and Protect the Global Ocean*, 2012.
[105] UNDP, *What Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*, 2019.
[106] Ibid.
[107] IUCN, *Area Based Management Tools, Including Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction: A Report of the workshop on Area Based Management Tools*, *including Marine Protected Areas in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction*, 2018.
[108] GEF, *TDA/SAP Methodology*, 2013.
[109] UN HLPF, *HLPF 2016 Position Paper Major Group of Non-Governmental Organisations*, 2016.
[110] UN Ocean Conference, *Protecting 1 Million sq. kms Through the $15 Million WCS Marine Protected Area Fund by Wildlife Conservation Society*, 2020.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

and the Congo, thus creating opportunities to "leverage, coordinate and scale up MPA efforts."[113] Similarly, the private sector has been recognized as having a critical role in the strengthening of ocean governance.[114] The World Ocean Council recognizes that ocean governance is often developed in governmental or academic settings without coordinated involvement of the many industries that depend on and utilize it.[115] The World Ocean Council plans to achieve better integration with the private sector in the context of ocean governance by organizing ocean industry leaders interaction with the UN via workshops.[116] The UN Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea does coordinate the participation of different stakeholders in a variety of forums and discussion platforms, such as NGOs, CSOs and the private sector, in order to report annually to the General Assembly.[117] Through such coordination efforts, UNDP aims to raise awareness on ocean governance, help Member States to overcome potential conflict over resource management, and establish partnerships with different interest groups.[118]

Challenges to integration: scalability

In a general sense, scalability is a characteristic of a system or approach by which the effectiveness of a successful project can be replicated to a wider scale while retaining its efficiency.[119] The ocean covers and crosses many international boundaries but lacks consistency between the variety of agreements and actors designed to govern it.[120] Namely, there are 576 bilateral and multilateral agreements between Member States to deal with ocean-related issues.[121] The co-existence of multiple agreements in isolation has led to disengagement between levels of administration leading to a lack of transparency, efficiency, and accountability.[122]

Lack of coordination, coherence, and effectiveness on ocean-related issues hinders the enforcement of environmental regulations.[123] To solve this, the UN High-Level Committee on Programmes created the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network, later known as UN-Oceans, to focus on MPAs.[124] They called for establishing at least 30% of the world's ocean as MPAs in order to safeguard marine biodiversity and ecosystems by 2020.[125] A UN-Oceans progress report in November 2019 stated that they were on track in achieving the 30% goal.[126] Furthermore, the creation of more MPAs is part of SDG 14.[127] In a progress report on the SDGs released in July 2020, ECOSOC stated that as of December 2019, 17% of national waters were MPAs.[128] These reserved areas utilize the Marine Protected Area Governance (MPAG) framework to combine economic, legal, knowledge, and communication incentives to solve inconsistencies in ocean governance.[129] Particularly for LDCs and SIDS, the risk of failure is high due to their geographical isolation, dependence on oceanic resources, exposure to sea-level rise and extreme

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[113] WCS MPA Fund, *Overview: A Call to Action for Ocean Protection*, 2019.
[114] World Ocean Council, *Ocean Governance and the Private Sector*, 2018, pp. 15-17.
[115] Ibid., p. 5.
[116] Ibid., p. 15.
[117] DOALOS, *The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea*, *its functions and activities*.
[118] UN-Water, *Water and sanitation interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2016.
[119] UNESCO, *A Blueprint for Ocean and Coast Sustainability*, 2011, p. 14.
[120] UNESCO, *Ocean Governance and Institutional Challenges*.
[121] University of Oregon, *International Environmental Agreements (IEA) Database Project*, 2016.
[122] UNESCO, *Ocean Governance and Institutional Challenges*.
[123] European Parliamentary Research Service, *Ocean governance and blue growth: Challenges*, *opportunities and policy responses*, 2019.
[124] UN-Oceans, *UN-Oceans,*.
[125] UN Ocean Conference, *MPA Action Group: Global Partnership to improve management effectiveness and sustainability of a global portfolio of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Locally Managed Marine Areas (L/MMAs)*, 2020.
[126] Ibid.
[127] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.
[128] UNECOSCO*, Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General (E/2020/57)*, *2020.*
[129] UN Environment, *Enabling Effective and Equitable Marine Protected Areas – Guidance on Combining Governance Approaches*, 2019, p. 20.

weather events.[130] For example, the French Port-Cros National Park uses the MPAG framework to establish cross-jurisdictional coordination.[131] They created a representative board with multiple stakeholders including national and local government, landowners and NGOs to mobilize cooperation.[132] Establishing MPAs enables economies to sustainably manage resources, set up accelerated funds to support innovation, and transition to a clean economy.[133]

Challenges to integration: scientific knowledge and innovation

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the ocean industry will be worth USD 3 trillion by 2030, making the regulation and preservation of it important.[134] Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), as laid out in the 2030 Agenda, and established by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, can be used to help achieve the SDGs.[135] National research agendas have been reprioritized to track the ocean's health by exploring the STI realm in greater detail.[136]There are several large international STI initiatives that are working towards SDGs like SDG 14.[137] For example, the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network is responsible for monitoring ocean acidity and providing capacity building frameworks to regions with limited scientific infrastructure, such as SIDS and LDCs.[138] Another example is the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange Programme.[139] This initiative facilitates the "exploitation, development, and exchange of oceanographic data and information among participating Member States."[140] New monitoring mechanisms push for international policies to adapt quickly to new knowledge as it becomes available.[141]

In 2019, the Meeting of the Communities of Ocean Action held in Incheon, provided technical and legal support towards good ocean governance practices; including policy development, legal frameworks, and partnership for multi-sectoral engagement.[142] STI can be used for political and legal reforms by providing research support, and processing data fairly for accurate reporting.[143] This theme was further explored in the fourth annual multi-stakeholder forum on STI for the SDGs held in 2019.[144] Furthermore, the 2020 UN Oceans Conference was to be held in Lisbon with a focus on "science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: Stocktaking, Partnerships and Solutions", however it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.[145]

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[130] UN-OHRLLS, *Small Island Developing States in Numbers. Climate Change Edition 2015*, 2015, pp. 8-22.
[131] UN Environment*, Enabling Effective and Equitable Marine Protected Areas – Guidance on Combining Governance Approaches. Case Study Compendium*, 2019, p. 60
[132] Ibid.
[133] UNESCO, *Build Green Societies in Small Island Developing States: Addressing Key Vulnerabilities*.
[134] OECD, *Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*.
[135] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (*A/RES/70/1*), 2015, p. 30.
[136] OECD, *Rethinking Innovation for a Sustainable Ocean Economy*, 2019.
[137] UN DESA Division for Sustainable Development, *In-depth analysis of Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments to Support and Monitor Their Implementation*, 2017.
[138] UN Ibid.
[139] UNESCO, *Monitoring the Ocean*.
[140] Ibid.
[141] World Economic Forum, *Harnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution for Oceans*, 2017, p. 16
[142] Communities of Ocean Action, *Community of Ocean Action on Sustainable Blue Economy: Interim Assessment*, 2019.
[143] UN IATT, *Science*, *Technology and Innovation for SDGs Roadmaps*, 2018.
[144] UN HLPF, *Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/HLPF/2019/6)*, 2019, p. 4.
[145] IISD, *High-Level UN Conference to Support the Implementation of SDG 14 (UN Ocean Conference) 2020.*

Transboundary Water Governance

According to the UN High-Level Panel on Water over 286 river basins and 600 aquifers (underground water sources) cross sovereign borders.[146] Furthermore, 90% of the world's population lives in nations sharing transboundary waters.[147] Because transboundary waterways have multiple users, transboundary water governance needs to consult all affected stakeholders increasing the complexity with the increase in stakeholders involved.[148] The complexities surrounding transboundary water sources are often associated with political friction and fueled by a high demand for livelihoods and industries.[149] However, due to the lack of regional frameworks, disputes over transboundary waterways have led to negative consequences as a result of these frictions, including intra and interstate conflict.[150] As such, UN-Water recommends greater cooperation and stakeholder involvement in transboundary water governance between states.[151] While there are a large amount of international agreements on transboundary waters, 450 since 1850, 60% of transboundary waters are not covered by international agreements.[152] Moreover, only six agreements exist regarding transboundary aquifers, showing a demonstrable need for more in-depth agreements that encompass all types of transboundary water sources.[153] The need to address water governance for all types of transboundary waterways is vital as the stress on waterways lacking agreements such as aquifers are expected to double by the year 2050.[154]

Transboundary water governance is a key part of achieving SDG 6, mainly SDG 6.a, which calls for cooperation in water and sanitation capacity building.[155] Moreover, increased cooperation as part of transboundary water governance can lead to increased trade, economic integration, and development, both directly and indirectly.[156]

Conclusion

There is a need to look beyond regional agendas and aim for political, legal, and institutional reforms across all levels of integration.[157] Ecosystem-based policies and management of the ocean's health, especially in vulnerable regions, is vital in achieving SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and SDG 14 (life below water).[158] UNDP pushes for a bottom-up approach to scale local initiatives to internationally cohesive policies through multilateral agreements, treaties, and conventions.[159] Oceans are considered a "common heritage of mankind" which requires progressive reforms to reverse damages done in the past and lay foundations for a sustainable future.[160] Similarly, transboundary waterways are used by 90% of the world's population and as a result, a lack of water governance frameworks will have negative

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[146] UN High Level Panel on Water, *Transboundary Water Governance*, 2016.
[147] Ibid.
[148] IUCN, *Transboundary Water Governance: Adaptation to Climate Change*, 2014, p. xv; Uprety, *Transboundary water governance: Lessons for South Asia*, 2012.
[149] Uprety, *Transboundary water governance: Lessons for South Asia*, 2012.
[150] Ibid.
[151] UN High Level Panel on Water, *Transboundary Water Governance*, 2016.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.
[155] UN DESA, *Goal 6*, 2020.
[156] UN High Level Panel on Water, *Transboundary Water Governance*, 2016.
[157] UN General Assembly, *International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (A/RES/72/249)*, 2017.
[158] UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14*, 2016.
[159] Ibid.
[160] UN General Assembly, *Report of the Preparatory Committee established by General Assembly resolution 69/292: Development of an International Legally Binding Instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (A/AC.287/2017/PC.4/2)*, 2017.

outcomes for the majority of the world's population.[161] Moreover, sustainable water governance and cooperation is a key part of realizing water focused SDGs.[162]

Further Research

Going forward, delegates should consider questions such as: How can STI be utilized for assessing current allocation of resources for marine and ecosystem-based management, including gaps in information and regulations? How can different monitoring mechanisms and local initiatives be scaled globally to protect the ocean's health? What barriers exist for SIDS and LDCs to implement ocean-policies? How can UNDP use its bottom-up approach to navigate emerging complexities in ocean governance? How can UNCLOS be made to meet present-day's oceanic challenges regarding innovation, economics and environment? How can transboundary water governance be addressed effectively at the international level? Should the international community focus on international agreements or regional frameworks to enhance transboundary water governance?

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> *Delegates will find this document useful as this is a landmark convention that sets international regulations and national obligations related to the usage of ocean and its resources. Articles 118, 136, and 140 outline the responsibilities of Member States concerning conservation of the "common heritage" of mankind through cooperation, development and peaceful usage. Although the provisions have been updated since then to account for emerging challenges, it remains a fundamental legislation across the UN system and beyond.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2012). *Catalysing Ocean Finance Volume I: Transforming Markets to Restore and Protect the Global Ocean*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Water%20and%20Ocean%20Governance/Oceans%20and%20Coastal%20Area%20Governance/Catalysing-Ocean-Finance-Vol-I.pdf

> *In this document presented by UNDP in partnership with the GEF, delegates can understand the planning tools concerned with the marine ecosystems and the effect on economies. The document estimates an initial public investment of USD 5 billion over the next ten to twenty years to catalyze public and private investment in the marine industry. These initiatives focus on sustainably utilizing and developing the global oceans. The viability of the project depends on multiple programs such as the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis/Strategic Action Programme (TDA/SAP), Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)/Framework for Sustainable Development of Coastal Areas (SDCA), and the Global or Regional Ocean Legal Frameworks.*

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *UNDP Support to the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Sustainable%20Development/14_Oceans_Jan15_digital.pdf

> *Delegates will find this document useful with its focus on UNDP's contribution to SDG 14 (life below water). UNDP, alongside the United Nations Development Group, formulated a strategy called MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support) for governance cohesion of national and local initiatives under the SDG umbrella. The*

[161] UN High Level Panel on Water, *Transboundary Water Governance*, 2016.
[162] Ibid.

document also defines ocean governance, identifies challenges in the commercial market due to overexploitation of resources and non-cohesive administration. The document promotes a bottom-up approach (from smaller planning scales to national cohesiveness) to push for multilateral agreements, knowledge management, and partnership. The focus is on fisheries, greener shipping industry, coastal management, pollution, and marine protected areas (MPAs).

United Nations Development Programme. (2019). *Works in Water and Ocean Governance: Impact Stories from the UNDP Water and Ocean Governance Programme*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: https://www.watergovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/What-works-in-Water-and-Ocean-Governance.pdf

In this document, delegates will find a contemporary review of the success stories in the Water and Ocean Governance Programme (WOGP) portfolio. The case studies are focused on different issues throughout the international community, including the shipping industry, safeguarding marine flora and fauna, ecosystem-based management of coasts and seabed, and applying a human rights-approach to water sustainability. This document highlights the importance integrating multiple stakeholders across different sectors for effective governance reforms. This document also attempts to define water and ocean governance regarding the timeline of its process for optimum ocean perseverance and human development. The document also attempts to explain the dimensions of governance and the present challenges including efficiency, knowledge sharing, and the scope of policy overlap between ocean governance and other water-utilizing industries.

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. (2013). *Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes*. Retrieved 17 July 2020 from: https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/water/publications/WAT_Text/ECE_MP.WAT_41.pdf

This convention is a good example for delegates looking to create an international framework on transboundary water governance. Article 9 sets out frameworks for cooperation, both bilaterally and multilaterally, on issues covered in the convention, such as pollution and natural disasters. The conventions articles on cooperation and mutual assistance help provide foundations that could be used to address frictions or conflicts regarding transboundary waterways. The convention is a regional agreement that has grown to include non-regional Member States and is a good example of how existing regional frameworks can be used at the international level.

World Economic Forum. (2017). *Harnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution for Oceans.* Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Harnessing_4IR_Oceans.pdf

Delegates will find this document useful because this document highlights the present-day challenges and opportunities to solve pressing environmental challenges related to oceans. The focus is on harnessing scientific and technological innovations supported by new and effective approaches to governance, financing and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Delegates can understand the core fundamentals of diverse datasets and new management tools in the context of policy gaps identified for contemporary ocean sustainability. The document emphasizes the importance of harnessing new technologies, innovations and expertise for empowering communities; raising accountability in all level of governance; and utilizing real-time data on oceanic activity.

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II. Closing the Energy Gap for All People

"In the 21st century, the ultimate renewable energy is human ingenuity."[163]

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to focus on the impact and significance of the energy gap and the millions of people still without access to clean, affordable energy because of it.[164] Goal 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlines the objective of providing all people with access to affordable and clean energy by the year 2030.[165] The "energy gap" refers to the number of people who lack access to clean, affordable energy.[166]

According to the *Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, there are still regional, social, and economic inequalities that limit progress to closing the energy gap.[167] In 2018, 90% of the world's population had access to electricity compared to 83% in 2010.[168] Despite this progress, there are 789 million people still living without electricity; of whom 85% are living in rural areas of the world.[169] Because of the COVID-19 pandemic the problem of the energy gap becomes even more significant as health facilities in areas without stable access to energy are not electrified or experience outages, affecting their capacity for essential health services.[170] The problem is particularly pronounced in sub-Saharan Africa having the lowest access rate to electricity.[171] Further, the SDG report shows that if the rate of progress doesn't improve in 2030 around 620 million people would still lack access to electricity.[172] These numbers do not consider the COVID-19 disruptions like the lack of growth in renewable energies due to decreasing oil prices, disruptions in supply chains, and reduced income.[173] Without access, people face greater economic and social hardships such as poverty, exclusion, and lack of education.[174] A lack of energy threatens economic growth, job creation, and access to education.[175]

Access to energy is just one of two primary objectives for SDG7 (affordable and clean energy).[176] UNDP also focuses on aiding in efforts to help transition existing energy sectors to more sustainable methods.[177] It is estimated that by 2040, the world's energy requirements will increase by 70%, with two thirds of the global population living in urban cities.[178] The energy sector alone accounts for over two thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).[179] Despite growing investments in renewable energies, sustainable electricity only accounts for 20% of the final energy usage.[180] By closing the energy gap more people will have access to energy.[181] To prevent an increase of pollution and GHG energy sources must be

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[163] UNESCO, *Address by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of the soon-to-be-published Manual "Empowering the Poor through Human Rights Litigation" Session in Parliament*, 2011.
[164] UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.
[165] UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.
[166] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 9.
[167] UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, 2020, p. 38.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid.
[174] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 9.
[175] Ibid.
[176] UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid.
[180] UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, 2019, p. 37.
[181] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 10.

sustainable.[182] Furthermore, ensuring clean energy prevents health issues arising with energy from fossil fuels, for example the use of solid fuels for indoor cooking.[183]

International and Regional Framework

A number of international agreements have highlighted the need to close the energy gap.[184] As part of the 1948 *Universal Declaration Of Human Rights* (UDHR), energy is declared as an important resource that should be provided and protected for all citizens regardless of social or economic status.[185] Energy was also a factor in the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which discussed the impact of development on the environment.[186] Subsequently, UNCED adopted *Agenda 21,* wherein Chapter 7 focuses on promoting sustainable human settlement development.[187] *Agenda 21* emphasizes promoting sustainable energy and transport systems in human settlements and provides policy guidelines to national governments and international organizations.[188] The objective of the policy guides are to support the transition towards more energy efficient technologies and increase renewable energy access and usage.[189]

In 2002, the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* placed greater emphasis on access to energy as a means to promote sustainable development.[190] The *Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,* adopted in 2002, made efforts to help Member States diversify energy resources by developing cleaner and more cost effective sustainable energy technologies.[191] The Johannesburg Declaration also emphasizes the exchange of these technologies to developing countries to increase the global share of renewable energy sources and their relative affordability.[192] The General Assembly resolution 67/215 from 2012 declared the Decade of Sustainable Energy for All from 2014 to 2024.[193] The goal of the initiative is to promote "renewable energy and energy efficiency worldwide."[194] The mid-point review from 2019 shows that improvements in electrification rates and energy efficiency enhance the potential for providing access to clean cooking and increasing deployment of renewables.[195] Furthermore, in 2017, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 71/256, the *New Urban Agenda*, which outlines the duty of Member States to provide clean, renewable, and affordable energy to support the growth of sustainable settlements.[196]

The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) recognizes the eradication of extreme poverty as the greatest global challenge.[197] Energy access and renewable energy transitions are the fundamental priorities of SDG7 (affordable and clean energy) and are closely interlinked with other SDGs and the overarching goal of poverty eradication.[198] Closing the energy gap for all reduces educational disparities, environmental threats, and enables the creation of new jobs and economic growth.[199]

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[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid., p. 13.
[185] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.
[186] UNCED, *Agenda 21*, 1992.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.
[190] UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/CONF.199.20)*, 2002.
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] UN General Assembly, *Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy (A/RES/67/215)*, 2012.
[194] UN University, *UN Launches Decade-long Sustainable Energy for All Initiative*, 2014.
[195] UN DESA, *Accelerating SDG 7 achievement, SDG 7 Policy Briefs in support of the High-Level Political Forum 2019*, 2019, p. 28.
[196] UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*, 2017, pp. 8-10.
[197] UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.
[198] Ibid.
[199] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate - Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy*, 2016, p. 9.

The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015) is the action plan designed to outline the requirements for financing the SDGs.[200] Specific to energy, the AAAA specifies the development of a new forum to bridge the infrastructure gap present within both urban and rural developments in order to be able to provide clean affordable energy to all people.[201] The AAAA also provides policy recommendations that incentivize public and private investment into energy infrastructure and renewable energy technology to increase the rate of global energy access.[202]

Role of the International System

As the primary operational program in achieving the SDGs, UNDP serves a fundamental role in providing leadership on and fostering collaboration between the variety of bodies, projects, and funds designed to increase energy access for all.[203] UNDP's work is coordinated through its *Strategic Plan 2018-2021*.[204] The *Strategic Plan* focuses on implementing the SDGs through six solutions: poverty eradication, strengthening accountable governance, increasing crisis prevention and recovery, promoting nature-based solutions, strengthening gender equality, and closing the energy gap.[205]

The UNDP Annual Report from 2019 illustrates UNDP's work with development banks around the globe to create conditions for investors to invest in green energy to expand the share of renewable energy in the energy mix offering different choices of investments.[206] UNDP's work in the energy sector is supported through bodies such as UN-Energy, which functions as the primary mechanism for inter-agency collaboration on energy projects.[207] UNDP also collaborates frequently with the International Energy Agency, particularly on the release of information and statistics related to energy access.[208] In 2019, UNDP announced a new global partnership with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), to accelerate low carbon energy transitions and explore joint initiatives aimed at accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.[209] The partnership seeks to provide assistance to developing countries to provide a more efficient transition to renewable energy and increased energy access.[210] IRENA launched with its partners the Great Investment Platform.[211] This platform aims to accelerate partnership, collaboration, and knowledge sharing between organizations, international financial institutions, and other entities interested in energy transformation.[212]

According to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) review of SDG7 in 2018, modern renewable power generation is expanding rapidly but greater efforts are required for it to have a significant impact on global usage.[213] Furthermore, another area highlighted by the HLPF review is the need for more consistent, improved, and available data on energy access.[214] The HLPF review of SDG 7 in 2019 highlights the need to expand "clean and safe cooking fuels and technologies for 3 billion people, to expand the use of renewable energy beyond the electricity sector, and to increase electrification in sub-Saharan Africa."[215] The 2020 Energy Progress report published by the International Energy Agency, IRENA, the UN Statistic

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[200] UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference in Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 6.
[201] Ibid., p. 16.
[202] Ibid.
[203] UNDP, *Looking to the Future*.
[204] Executive Board of the United Nations Development Fund et al., *UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021*, 2017, p. 11.
[205] Ibid., p. 12.
[206] UNDP, *Annual Report 2019*, p. 27.
[207] UN-Energy, *Share Knowledge and Data*.
[208] UNDP, *Looking to the Future*.
[209] UNDP, *UNDP and IRENA Join Forces to Advance Low-Carbon Energy Transition*, 2019.
[210] Ibid.
[211] IRENA, *IRENA Invites Renewable Energy Developers to Register Projects on Investment Platform*, 2020.
[212] Ibid.; Climate Investment Platform, *Network of Partners*.
[213] UN HLPF, *2018 HLPF Review of SDG Implementation*, 2018, p. 1.
[214] Ibid., p. 7.
[215] UN DESA, *SDG 7 Update*, 2019, p. 1.

Division, the World Bank, and the World Health Organization summarizes efforts made to provide "universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy by 2030."[216]

Produced in conjunction with several other organizations, the Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE), using 27 indicators, aim to answer whether governments are upholding the targets of SDG 7 as well as identifying the most critical areas needing support.[217] By using these measurements, RISE provides accurate information for organizations and project networks to prioritize the areas with the greatest needs.[218] Similarly, Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) is an organization that focuses its efforts on achieving SDG 7 in areas with the highest needs.[219] SEforALL works on achieving electricity for all in Africa through policy reform, investment promotion, and private sector engagement.[220]

Energy Access in Rural Communities

Energy access is vital and necessary in order to ensure the progression of community development as well as the fulfillment of the SDGs.[221] Access rates between communities differed, with 79% of people in rural areas having access as opposed to 97% of people living in urban communities.[222] Some of the major obstacles that limit rural communities in gaining access to energy are funds and location.[223] Within many rural communities in developing countries, there are infrastructural challenges in establishing complex energy grids or generators.[224] For many developing countries, expanding the outreach of already existing electrical grids can be a very costly investment that governments cannot afford.[225] The investment environment of developing countries can be high risk and can prove difficult for Member States to develop policies to create a safe investment environment for the private sector.[226]

Lack of access to energy can also exacerbate existing societal disparities in developing rural communities.[227] For example, traditional cookstoves often double as a stove and source of heat for rural communities where electrical cooking equipment is not available.[228] These methods can cause health issues to the people in the home.[229] Every year 4.3 million people die from indoor air pollution, of which it is estimated women and children make up the majority.[230] UNDP started a market transformation project in Kenya that incentivized highly efficient Biomass Stoves and as a result have installed 1522 stoves in 723 schools giving 11,000 children access to safe educational institutions.[231] Because of the COVID-19 pandemic these disparities have an even wider impact with people being confined to their homes for extended periods of time.[232]

Moreover, energy access in poor, rural communities does not allow for reliable treatment of COVID-19 patients.[233] Health centers in rural areas are often affected by poor connections and voltage fluctuations

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[216] World Bank et al., *Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report 2020*, 2020, p. 1.
[217] World Bank et al., *Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy*, 2016, p. xv.
[218] Ibid., p. xviii.
[219] SEforAll, *2018 Annual Report: Leaving No One Behind*, 2018, p. 17.
[220] Ibid., p. 16.
[221] *Achieving targets on Energy Helps Meet Other Global Goals, UN Forum Told,* UN DGC, 2018.
[222] IRENA, *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report*, 2019, p. 15.
[223] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 30.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Ibid.
[227] IEA, *Energy Access Outlook 2017*, 2017, p. 57.
[228] Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] UNDP, *Gender and Climate Change: Gender and Sustainable Energy*, 2017, p. 3.
[231] UNDP, *Market Transformation for Highly Efficient Biomass Stoves for Institutions and Medium-sized Enterprise*, 2011.
[232] UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, 2020, p. 38.
[233] Ibid.

that damage medical equipment.[234] *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020* highlights the need for accessible, affordable, reliable and sustainable energy to treat patients in hospitals, to provide accessible clean water, to disseminate important medical information, and to enable remote learning for students.[235] Additionally, the pandemic affects the progress toward SDG7, because declining oil prices can hinder the promotion of clean and affordable energy while the pandemic caused economic consequences for many household and business, which limits their ability to pay for electricity.[236]

Off-Grid Energy Solutions

In order to address the issue of energy access in rural communities, UNDP and other organizations have invested in off-grid energy solutions, which do not rely on or use public utility services or networks.[237] UNDP researches and promotes these development projects so that rural communities can have access to clean, reliable energy.[238] One example of an off-grid solution is the 'Off-Grid Box' project by UNDP in Tanzania that provides electricity and clean water.[239] The box is a retrofitted shipping container equipped with hardware needed to produce electricity and clean water.[240] It is designed to allow rural communities to have access to a reliable source of off-grid electricity which, in turn, enables rural economic activities and reduce household financial or medical costs.[241] Additionally, solar mini grids now have the potential to provide increased levels of electricity that can be used for productive means such as watering crops, collecting water, and clean cooking and heating.[242] The widespread deployment of solar mini grids, however, will require significant investment on the part of the private sector.[243]

Increased access to electricity allows communities to use technologies to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.[244] The placement of off-grid solutions in rural communities allows households and health clinics to develop and provide better services.[245] A rapid expansion of the medical cold chain to deliver a vaccine is also needed and off-grid solutions could contribute to achieve this.[246] Vaccines need to be stored cold between 2-8 degrees Celsius.[247] In order to reach inhabitants of rural areas with vaccines and medication a safe medical cold chain is necessary.[248] However, due to the pandemic, off-grid companies face difficulties to provide communities with off-grid power.[249] Without off-grid power solutions, local industry faces economic problems while also impacting communities negatively.[250]

Other organizations, such as SEforALL, have begun their own Integrated Electrification Pathways (IEPs) that focus on inclusive planning and policy measures that help projects achieve the targets of SDG7.[251] IEPs serve as implementation tactics that utilize new technological approaches and delivery models to provide energy access to areas with highest human needs.[252] UNDP works with governments to increase the energy access rate of the country by expanding off-grid solutions.[253] In Afghanistan the installation of

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[234] Ibid.
[235] Ibid.
[236] IRENA, *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report*, 2020, p. 1.
[237] UNDP, *Derisking Renewable Energy Investments: Off Grid Electrification*, 2018, p. 25.
[238] Ibid., p. 26.
[239] UNDP, *Bringing Clean Energy and Water to Off-Grid Communities*, 2018.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid.
[242] UNDP, *Derisking Renewable Energy Investments: Off Grid Electrification*, 2018, p. 26.
[243] Ibid.
[244] UNDP, *COVID- 19 and Human Development, Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery*, 2020, p.14.
[245] SEforAll, *COVID-19 response*.
[246] SEforAll, *Chilling Prospects: Tracking Sustainable Cooling for All 2020,* 2020, p.6.
[247] Ibid.
[248] Ibid.
[249] SEforAll, *COVID-19 response: Supporting the off-grid energy sector*, 2020.
[250] Ibid.
[251] SEforAll, *Integrated Electrification Pathways for Universal Access to Electricity: A Primer*, 2019, p. 7.
[252] Ibid., p. 9.
[253] UNDP, *UNDP Energy Projects*, 2015, p. 1.

micro hydropower systems provided electricity to 168,000 off-grid communities.[254] Additionally, in Nepal, a similar project was able to provide electricity access to over 45,000 people.[255]

Sustainable Urban Cities

Over 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas and accounts for 70% of global carbon dioxide emissions.[256] Energy access still remains an issue in urban communities, as accessibility and stability of electricity can cause concern for many in poverty.[257] Urban cities also experience blackouts, irregular supply, and low or fluctuating voltage output.[258] Affordability is another key issue as many times energy costs can be very high causing people to survive for periods of time without electricity.[259] UNDP, in its *Sustainable Urbanization Strategy*, discusses benefits, such as cost savings and increased income, which an increase of energy efficiency in buildings, business, and industries can help provide.[260] Sustainable energy solutions alongside energy efficiency methods can also contribute to resolving other urban issues such as air quality, waste management, and improved health.[261]

Though oil prices declined, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, it did not lead to a wider access to energy for people as reduced incomes limited their ability to pay for the oil.[262] This highlights the need for sustainable off-grid energy solutions which could offer business models such as "pay-as-you go".[263] Off-grid solutions prevent large up-front installation costs for households and the risk of foreign exchange can be eliminated.[264] Lastly, heat waves impact inhabitants of slums and informal urban settlements, as they are not able to stay indoors due to the lack of cooling systems for their homes.[265] Ensuring a stable source of green energy is necessary in order for cities to have more inclusive policies that will aid the urban poor and marginalized communities and provide opportunities for further development.[266]

Conclusion

UNDP, in its efforts to increase access to clean energy and provide alternative solutions to both rural and urban communities, has seen steady progress as it continues to expand its partnerships and investments into projects.[267] The lack of access to energy in both rural and urban communities caused by improper funds and infrastructure create health, economic, and social problems that can lead to devastating effects.[268] Although progress has been made towards achieving SDG7 by 2030, an increase in funds and coordination among UNDP and the rest of the UN system will be required to ensure people receive the support needed.[269] At the current rate of progress a projected 620 million people still lack access to electricity in 2030, not considering the COVID-19 disruptions which may reverse progress made and showing that a more concerted effort is needed.[270]

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[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid., p. 18.
[256] UNDP, *Sustainable Cities and Transport.*
[257] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 30.
[258] Ibid.; UNStats, *Population density and urbanization*, 2017.
[259] UNDP, *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate*, 2016, p. 30.
[260] UNDP, *Sustainable Urbanization Strategy*, 2016, p. 11.
[261] Ibid.
[262] UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report,* 2020, p. 38; UNDP, *COVID- 19 and Human Development, Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery*, 2020, p. 14.
[263] UNDP, *Derisking Renewable Energy Investments: Off Grid Electrification*, 2018, p. 15.
[264] Ibid.
[265] SEforAll, *Chilling Prospects: Tracking Sustainable Cooling for All 2020*, 2020, p. 38.
[266] UNDP, *Sustainable Urbanization Strategy*, 2016, p. 11.
[267] UNDP, *UNDP Support to the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 7*, 2016, p. 4.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Ibid.
[270] Ibid., p. 4; UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Report,* 2020, p. 38.

Further Research

When researching the topic, delegates will need to take into consideration several questions: What are some of the major challenges when attempting to provide energy access to all people? What are some of the major inequalities present in clean energy access? Why is energy access for rural communities so crucial? Why are off-grid solutions increasingly vital to the success of SDG7(affordable and clean energy)? What are benefits that can be expected of off-grid energy systems? What are some major challenges for energy efficiency and renewable energy for urban cities? How is the COVID-19 pandemic impacting progress on SDG7?

Annotated Bibliography

International Renewable Energy Agency. (2020). *Tracking SDG7: The Energy Progress Report*. Retrieved 19 July 2020 from: https://www.irena.org/-/media/Files/IRENA/Agency/Publication/2020/May/SDG7Tracking_Energy_Progress_2020.pdf

This report provides an overview of the global progress regarding the energy gap. The report gives delegates information about access to electricity, energy access for cooking, renewable energy, and efficient energy. Lastly the report gives information and numbers about the progress on SDG7. With this source delegates gain in-depth understanding of the topic at hand.

Sustainable Energy For All. (2020). *Annual Monitoring Review.* Retrieved 19 July 2020 from: https://www.seforall.org/system/files/2020-05/SEforALL_2019_Annual_Monitoring-Review.pdf

This document provides delegates with information about what has been achieved so far in regard to the topic. Further the document explains behavioral changes regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving energy for all. Especially the "outcome" section is useful for delegates to understand the topic and think further about how to achieve the goal of energy for all.

Sustainable Energy For All. (2020). *Chilling Prospects: Tracking Sustainable Cooling for All 2020* Retrieved 19 July 2020 from: https://www.seforall.org/system/files/2020-07/CP-2020-SEforALL.pdf

This report highlights the importance of access to cooling which is now on the agenda of countries and international development partners. The report will help delegates understand the importance of cooling and with that access to energy for all. Especially in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic this aspect of the broader topic is important because potential vaccines and medications need reliable cooling chains.

United Nations Development Programme. (2016). *Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate - Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: http://www.un-expo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNDP-Energy-Strategy-2017-2021.pdf

This report details the UNDP guidelines and strategies on improving energy access for the years 2017-2021, noting the challenges and implementation practices around sustainable energy development projects. UNDP details three main challenges that must be considered: social, economic, and environmental. The report also identifies methods of improvement and application where projects can meet these challenges. It also emphasizes and describes the benefits and assistance that energy partnerships can have in addressing these concerns. Delegates will find this useful for the various explanations of program methodology and specific challenges that must be overcome.

United Nations Development Programme. (2018). *Derisking Renewable Energy Investment: Off-Grid Electrification*. Retrieved 21 July 2020 from: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Climate%20Strategies/DREI%20Off-Grid%20Electrification%20-%20Full%20Report%20(20181210).pdf

This report by UNDP details methods and policy decisions to help facilitate cooperation between policymakers and the private sector in being able to fund and provide energy access to those in need. Part of the objective of UNDP is to further promote and manage

cooperation between the public and private sectors in energy access projects designed for smaller communities. Off-grid systems are some of the more useful systems that can be operated in order to ensure that people in marginalized communities as well as off-grid communities can still have access to electricity for basic needs. This provides delegates an in-depth understanding of how off-grid systems function in project management.

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