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Economic and Social Council Background Guide 2020

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2020 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This year's staff is: Director Allison Tu and Assistant Director Allison Koelzer. Allison holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from California State University, San Bernardino and will be pursuing a Master's in Public Administration. Allison holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies and Political Science from Park University. She currently works for a nonprofit organization as the Student Initiative Coordinator and Digital Media Consultant.

The topics under discussion for ECOSOC are:

- I. Promoting Gender Equality in Investment and Entrepreneurship
- II. Combating Illicit Trafficking of Precious Metals and Other Natural Resources

ECOSOC, as one of the six primary organs of the United Nations system, addresses issues relating to sustainability, cooperation, and development. ECOSOC focuses on issues relating to economic and social importance, with key functions highlighting the Sustainable Development Goals throughout its coordination efforts amongst its subsidiary bodies. ECOSOC works to streamline these issues when overseeing functional and regional commissions, specialized agencies, and initiating international conferences and studies. ECOSOC's progress culminates in drafting conventions and annual reports highlighting policy recommendations that are submitted to the General Assembly.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to conduct additional research, explore your Member State's policies in-depth, and examine the policies of other Member States to improve your ability to negotiate and reach consensus. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their research to draft and submit a position paper. Guidelines are available in the NMUN Position Paper Guide.

The NMUN website has many additional resources, including two that are essential both in preparation for the conference and as a resource during the conference. They are:

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

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

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

Sincerely,
Allison Tu, Director
Allison Koelzer, Assistant Director



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Committee Overview

Introduction

Chapter X of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a founding body and one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN).¹ ECOSOC oversees the allocation of approximately 70% of UN resources through its oversight of 12 specialized agencies and 13 functional and regional commissions.² The Council is mandated to serve as the primary body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics, to advise and coordinate the activities of Member States and other UN entities on matters within this mandate, and to lead discussion on the implementation of the international development framework.³

ECOSOC has undergone several reforms since its inception; notably, during 1960s and 1970s, developing Member States worked to broaden the agenda of the UN and bring focus to new areas, including the promotion of development and the elimination of poverty.⁴ In 1971, General Assembly adopted resolution 2847(XXVI), which amended Article 61 of the *Charter of the United Nations* by increasing ECOSOC membership from 27 to 54 in order to better reflect global economic and geographic diversity.⁵ In 1977, the General Assembly adopted resolution 32/197 to address the “Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System” and to improve ECOSOC’s effectiveness by increasing coordination with its subsidiary bodies.⁶ To avoid any duplication of work due to broad mandates, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/227 in 1995, clarifying that its role is to provide policy guidance while ECOSOC’s focus is on coordination of implementation.⁷

Throughout the last decade, the General Assembly implemented additional reforms aimed at strengthening the working methods of ECOSOC.⁸ These reforms included an expansion of ECOSOC’s functions and powers to enable it to take the lead on identifying and discussing emerging challenges, to act as a policy forum for global leaders through the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), especially concerning the integration of sustainable development efforts, and to provide a platform of accountability for all levels of monitoring and reporting on universal commitments.⁹ An example of this is ECOSOC’s commitment to engaging youth in a partnership focused on ensuring the successful attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰ This partnership began when the 2010-2011 Year of Youth prompted the first ECOSOC sanctioned Youth Forum in 2012, which successfully engaged the youth and brought to light issues like unemployment for the younger generation.¹¹ The success of the first sanctioned ECOSOC Youth Forum has now resulted in a more structured and thorough annual forum.¹² In 2018, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/305 reiterating that ECOSOC “should be guided by the principles of inclusiveness, transparency, and

¹ UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.

² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; Educational Broadcasting Corporation, *Kofi Annan – Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*, 2016.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2020.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Restructuring the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system (A/RES/32/197)*, 1977.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields (A/RES/50/227)*, 1996.

⁸ New Zealand, *United Nations Handbook 2017-18*, 2018; UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 61/16 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/68/1)*, 2013.

⁹ UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.

¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Youth Forum*, 2019.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

flexibility.”¹³ The 2020 Youth Forum was slated to take place in mid-April but has since been postponed due to COVID-19 with a new date to be announced at a later time.¹⁴

Governance, Structure, and Membership

ECOSOC is comprised of 54 Member States, each of which is elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.¹⁵ The members are elected according to the geographical distribution of UN Member States that are meant to ensure representation from all regions and levels of development; seats are allocated to each of the following five regional groups of states: 14 to Africa, 11 to Asia and the Pacific, six to Eastern European, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean, and 13 to Western European and Others Group.¹⁶ ECOSOC proceedings are overseen by a President, Vice-President, and Rapporteur, in tandem with a Bureau consisting of the President and four Vice-Presidents.¹⁷ These representatives are each elected to one-year terms at the end of each annual session in July.¹⁸ The Bureau is responsible for setting ECOSOC’s agenda, devising action plans, and collaborating with the Secretariat on administrative duties.¹⁹ ECOSOC’s presidency rotates among the regional groups.²⁰ The Bureau is elected by the full council annually in July.²¹ The current president is Ambassador Mona Juul of Norway, who was elected on 25 July 2019.²²

Each year, ECOSOC meets for one organizational session, which typically takes place anytime between February and July, and one substantive session, which usually occurs in mid-July.²³ Organizational sessions are dedicated to administrative aspects, such as agenda setting and elections to the Bureau.²⁴ During substantive sessions, meetings are divided into five segments, the High-Level Segment, the Coordination Segment, the Operational Activities Segment, the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, and the Integration Segment, with each focusing on separate thematic aspects of the Council’s work.²⁵ The addition of these five segments were mandated by General Assembly resolution 68/1.²⁶ Each segment allows the plenary body to focus on specific agenda items and dedicate a specific number of working days to each segment.²⁷ The High-Level Segment focuses on future trends and long term impacts of the SDGs and is held annually in July.²⁸ The Coordination Segment meets annually upon the discretion of the Council and focuses on carrying out the recommendations brought forth by the High-level Segment.²⁹ The Operational Activities Segment meets annually after “first regular sessions of the executive boards of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system,” this segment focuses on providing guidance to ECOSOC on the implementation and strategies established by the General Assembly.³⁰ The Humanitarian Affairs segment focuses on strengthening assistance from Member States on humanitarian emergencies with the additional goal of transitioning relief efforts towards development efforts, this segment is held annually in June.³¹ Lastly the Integration Segment focuses on consolidating “all the

¹³ UN General Assembly, *Review of the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 68/1 on the Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/72/305)*, 2018, p. 3.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly & ECOSOC, *UN75 Youth Envoy and ECOSOC Youth Forum Postponement Letter to Member States*, 2020.

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Members*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*; *Ibid*; *Ibid*.

¹⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Council (E/5715/Rev.2)*, 1992.

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Bureau*.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² UN ECOSOC, *President of ECOSOC*, 2019.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 1.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 4.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 8.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 4.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 4.

²⁸ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC High-level Segment*, 2019.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

inputs of Member States, the subsidiary bodies of the Council, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders and to promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.”³²

ECOSOC oversees 14 subsidiary bodies and forums that hold their own sessions and provide recommendations, draft resolutions, and annual reports to the Council and, in some cases, to other bodies.³³ The two most common types of subsidiary bodies are functional, which focus on specific issues, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and regional commissions that focus on geopolitical topics, such as the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).³⁴ Other subsidiary bodies include standing, ad hoc, expert, and other related bodies.³⁵ Examples of subsidiary bodies include: the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations which serves as a standing committee, the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS which serves as an ad hoc body, The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues which serves as an expert body, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.³⁶ Each subsidiary body has adopted specific methods of work to align with its mandate, and methods are updated regularly.³⁷

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The *Charter of the United Nations* mandates that ECOSOC “may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters,” including human rights and freedoms, to present to the General Assembly and to UN specialized agencies.³⁸ ECOSOC may also provide information and assist the Security Council when addressing humanitarian crises, such as in natural disaster response.³⁹ Most recently, a special meeting was convened in April 2019 to respond to Cyclone Idai and the negative impact it may have on progress made towards SDGs in the affected countries.⁴⁰ As emphasized by recent reforms accentuating this role, ECOSOC also provides coordination, monitoring, and advice to UN programs, agencies, and funds on international development policies and their implementation.⁴¹ To further allow for coordination, a 2007 reform of ECOSOC brought forth by General Assembly resolution 61/16, established the High-level Segment, an annual meeting that brings together representatives from governments, the private sector, academia, and civil society to discuss development cooperation.⁴²

In addition to overseeing its subsidiary bodies, ECOSOC’s mechanisms allow for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to consult on the work of the UN.⁴³ There are more than 5,000 NGOs that have been granted ECOSOC consultative status, allowing them to attend and participate in various UN meetings, conferences, and special sessions and participate in international discussions.⁴⁴ By obtaining consultative status, these NGOs are allowed to provide insight to different UN bodies, discussion, and policies as they pertain to specialized topics and regions.⁴⁵ Applications for consultative status are

³² Ibid, p. 4.

³³ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Functional Commissions*, 2014.

³⁴ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Format and Organizational Aspects of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (A/RES/67/290)*, 2013, p. 7.

³⁸ Ibid, Ch. X, Art. 62

³⁹ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Special Meetings on Emergency Situations*, 2016.

⁴⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Presidential Statement on the Occasion of the ECOSOC Special Meeting Response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe*, 2019.

⁴¹ UN ECOSOC, *Progress in the Implementation of General Assembly Resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System (E/RES/2013/5)*, 2013, p. 1; Ibid.

⁴² UN General Assembly, *Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council (A/RES/61/16)*, 2006.

⁴³ UN DESA, *Introduction to ECOSOC Consultative Status*.

⁴⁴ UN ECOSOC, *List of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as of 1 September 2018 (E/2019/INF/5)*, 2018.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

considered by ECOSOC's Committee on NGOs, which was established in 1946 and is made up of 19 Member States.⁴⁶ The Committee on NGOs directly reports to ECOSOC on the procedural and substantive matters raised by NGOs.⁴⁷ ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 of 1996 defines the principles, eligibility requirements, rules, procedures, obligations, and responsibilities for NGOs and the UN in establishing the consultative relationship.⁴⁸ In the latest report from the June 2019 session, the Committee granted consultative status to 219 NGOs, deferred an additional 198 NGOs for consideration in 2020, and reviewed quadrennial reports of suspended NGOs, which resulted in the reinstatement of 37 organizations and the removal of 115 organizations.⁴⁹ Consultative status NGOs help advance the 2030 Agenda as they tend to be localized, national, or international organizations that can better assess the needs and capacities of Member States.⁵⁰

The HLPF, under the guidance of ECOSOC, reviews progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.⁵¹ The HLPF serves as an annual forum in which the international system can review progress on the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and provides governments an opportunity to discuss their efforts on the SDGs.⁵² General Assembly resolution 67/290 established the HLPF in 2013.⁵³

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

Beginning ECOSOC's annual session, the Operational Activities Segment met from 21-23 May 2019, with several ECOSOC subsidiary organs, including the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Forum on financing and Development, to reflect on ECOSOC's focus for Member States to have a united approach for development and strategies to achieve the SDGs laid out in the 2030 Agenda.⁵⁴ During this time, the Operational Activities Segment reviewed the Secretary-General's report which outlined strategies and provisions which Member States should utilize to achieve the SDGs.⁵⁵ These strategies included importance of utilizing multilateral cooperation among Member States and partnerships with private entities to achieve the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.⁵⁶ Partnership and multilateral cooperation are imperative to achieve the SDGs by the goal year of 2030.⁵⁷ The Operational Activities Segment was scheduled to meet in May 2020 to discuss the Secretary-General's progress report and what to expect from the new Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, however this has been postponed due to COVID-19, with new dates to be announced at a later time and the preliminary agenda has yet to be released.⁵⁸

On 11 April 2019, The Partnerships Forum showcased the effectiveness of partnerships with multi-stakeholders and how these platforms could be used to more effectively implement SDGs.⁵⁹ The Partnership Forum notably commended five partnerships with goals to achieve specific SDGs.⁶⁰ Notably The Global Partnership for Education aims to achieve SDG 4, Education Equality, by mobilizing finances

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Consultative Relationship between the United Nations and Non-governmental Organizations (E/RES/1996/31)*, 1996, pp. 53-61.

⁴⁹ UN DGC, *Concluding Session, Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations Recommends Status for 219 Groups, Adopts Report Containing 2020 Meeting Schedule*, 2019.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ UN, High-Level Political Forum, *Lessons learned from the first cycle of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)*, 2019.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ United Nations, General Assembly & UN ECOSOC. *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 (A/74/73-E/2019/14)*.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.29.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p.29.

⁵⁸ UN ECOSOC, *QCPR in 2020*.

⁵⁹ UN ECOSOC, *2019 Partnerships Forum*, 2019; UN ECOSOC, *Development Cooperation Forum*, 2019.

⁶⁰ Ibid; Ibid.

and working with 67 developing Member States to ensure basic and quality education to its citizens.⁶¹ Another partnership showcased during the 2019 Forum was the Global Islamic Finance and Impact Investing Platform which aims to achieve SDG 13, Climate Action, through increasing human development and social conscious investing.⁶²

From 15-18 April 2019, the Forum on Financing for Development met to review the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015) on financing sustainable development.⁶³ The resulting report recommended three pillars of action: facilitate the use of all financial resources including innovative options at all levels, improve and align incentives for public and private actors with sustainable development, and operationalize financial frameworks.⁶⁴ The three pillars of action aim to create cooperation for international development efforts, utilize trade as an engine for international development, and creating more sustainability for debt.⁶⁵

During the 2019 annual session, HLPF discussed the progress on multiple SDGs under the theme “*Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality*”.⁶⁶ SDGs discussed during the 2019 annual session were; SDG 4, Quality Education, SDG 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities, SDG 13, Climate Action, SDG 16, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17, Partnerships for the Goals.⁶⁷ At the end of the annual session, the HLPF submitted a report of the forum to the ECOSOC plenary body.⁶⁸ The report included a review of SDGs 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 and the progress that has been made to achieve these goals.⁶⁹ Regarding ECOSOC President Juul noted in her summary that “the world is not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,” however, “the 2030 Agenda and the Goals remain the best road map”.⁷⁰ President Juul noted this due to the lack of partnerships and multilateral cooperation of Member States to maintain steady progress towards these Goals.⁷¹ During the HLPF, the UN Youth Envoy, Jayathma Wickramanayake, stressed the importance of including youth, which is now the most educated and “globally-minded in history,” in order to realize the goals set in the 2030 Agenda.⁷² HLPF is slated to meet 7-16 July 2020 to discuss this year’s theme: “*Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*,” currently the preliminary agenda has not been released.⁷³

As part of the 2019 HLPF, many Member States presented their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), which revealed that the all Member States may benefit from expanding the time allotted during the HLPF to discussing the outcomes of the VNRs and the timeline of the SDGs.⁷⁴ Many Member States expressed the need to shift the global approach toward achieving the SDGs, so as to ensure that no country is left struggling to meet the goals set by the 2030 Agenda.⁷⁵ On 23 September 2019, the Global Climate Action Summit took place followed by the SDG Summit on 24-25 September 2019 in New York.⁷⁶ During these summits several Member States came forward and presented viable plans to implement the SDGs by 2030 and help significantly reduce greenhouse gases and CO₂ emissions over the next decade.⁷⁷ Viable

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ UN ECOSOC, *Follow-up and Review of the Financing for Development Outcomes and the Means of Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (E/FFDF/2019/3)*, 2019.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ UN ECOSOC, *High-Level Political Forum 2020 Under the Auspices of ECOSOC*, 2020.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its 2019 session (E/HLPF/2019/7)*, 2019.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 1.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 1.

⁷² UN, Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy of Youth, *2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum*, 2019.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ UN DESA, *SDG Summit 2019*, 2019; UN Climate Action Summit 2019, *UN Climate Action Summit 2019*, 2019.

⁷⁷ Ibid

plans presented by Member States included utilizing localized and regional cooperation to actively achieve the SDGs.⁷⁸

Conclusion

ECOSOC is responsible for coordinating activities and programs through the expansive UN system towards the ultimate goal of sustainable development.⁷⁹ The Council has demonstrated a commitment to mobilizing resources and building efforts to address key priority issues, including the promotion of development and the formation and maintenance of international partnerships, such as partnerships with business entities for the purpose of funding development initiatives.⁸⁰ The Council's President Juul stated during her July 2019 inauguration that her priorities as Council President are to provide more predictable funding for the body, as well as more accountability and transparency for the Council, as it is her belief that the committee's credibility depends on the value for people and therefore should secure a future with fact-based and action-oriented initiatives.⁸¹

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http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/newfunct/pdf14/the_new_ecosoc_31_march_2014.pdf

This report details the reforms adopted by the General Assembly on the work of ECOSOC in 2013. Particularly, these reforms enhanced the role of the Council as a leader in policy dialogues and recommendations; introduced the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development; created a platform for accountability for universal commitments, monitoring and reporting on progress; and emphasized the need for greater cooperation among development agencies. This source will be helpful for delegates as this report summarizes the ways ECOSOC has planned to implement these reforms and follow through on creating a more accountable international system.

United Nations, High-Level Political Forum. (2019). *Lessons learned from the first cycle of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)*. Retrieved 29 February 2020 from:

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23135Summary_of_EGM_on_HLPF_review_FINAL.pdf

This document provides summary of the High-Level Political Forum for the 2019 session in addition to lending insight into the topics discussed by members of Forum and other stakeholders. This document was created after the adoption of A/Res/70/299 in which the General Assembly called for the reorganization of the Forum. This document will help delegates to better understand the role of the High-Level Political Forum under ECOSOC and how it was formed.

United Nations, General Assembly Economic and Social Council. (2019). *Implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, 2019 (A/74/73-E/2019/14)*. Retrieved 28 March 2020 from:

<https://undocs.org/A/74/73>

This report by the Secretary-General was prepared in response to the upcoming 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) as outlined in General Assembly resolution 71/243 (2016). It contains the Secretary-General's vision for implementing and supporting the provisions set forth in the report. This report sets out the action plan which Member States should attempt to conform with and implement while working to achieve the 2030 Agenda. As the main body reviewing the implementation of the QCPR mandate, ECOSOC was highly involved in the drafting of the report through the ECOSOC Dialogue and will be influential in the implementation of this new report through its Operational

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Activities Segment. Delegates should refer to this report to gain an understanding of ECOSOC's long-term aims and consider what short-term policies and coordinating efforts will help ECOSOC achieve these goals as the QCPR mandate is being evaluated for 2020.

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I. Promoting Gender Equality in Investment and Entrepreneurship

*“The drive to build gender equality is a direct way to evolve economic justice, achieve sustainable development, promote peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhance sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and productivity, end poverty in all its forms everywhere, and ensure the wellbeing of all. This is a shared responsibility, needing action in all sectors and by everyone: public and private sectors, men and women alike”.*⁸²

Introduction

Gender equality is a highlighted priority in multiple United Nations (UN) entities and agencies, as laid out in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5.⁸³ Former Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon called to attention the importance of inclusive economic policies that ensures “women entrepreneurs have access to technology and finance” in the 2016 *Report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment*.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the promotion of SDG 5 within the scope of work related to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolutions and programs has largely been focused on the term, ‘economic empowerment’.⁸⁵ The promotion of women in the workforce has been a key goal of within ECOSOC as the body has sought to empower women economically through investment and entrepreneurship.⁸⁶ As such, ECOSOC is aware of the gaps that remain in establishing transparent and comprehensive tracking systems of progress towards gender equality as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on “Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2019/68).”⁸⁷ There is also a need for additional international measurements to track progress on promoting gender equality.⁸⁸ The international system is addressing the economic empowerment of women through partnerships and knowledge-sharing with UN bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).⁸⁹ ECOSOC also works to address the challenges of promoting gender equality through investment and entrepreneurship by providing funding recommendations and progress monitoring to Member States.⁹⁰

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor’s (GEM) *2018 - 2019 Women’s Entrepreneurship Report* noted that, women are less likely to be entrepreneurs as they face more challenges in starting a business.⁹¹ The report further states that in 40% of the economies in the world, women’s ‘entrepreneurial activity’ is half as likely as men.⁹² Oftentimes women may be at a disadvantage due to the lack of and exclusion from financial opportunities through investment and banking services.⁹³ A study published in the Global Index Database shows that, “Women are less likely than men to have access to financial institutions or have a bank account. While 65% of men report having an account at a formal financial institution, only 58 per

⁸² UN Women, *Statement: Starting from girls, making women’s lives count: Statement by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Women, 2017.*

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁸⁴ UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment, *Leave no one behind: a call to action for gender equality and women’s economic empowerment*, 2016.

⁸⁵ Guzman & Kacperczyk, *Gender Gap in Entrepreneurship*, 2019.

⁸⁶ UN DESA, *Achieving Gender Equality, Women’s Empowerment and Strengthening Development Cooperation*, 2010.

⁸⁷ UN ECOSOC, *Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, Report of the Secretary-General (E/RES/2019/68)*, 2019.

⁸⁸ UN Women, *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*.

⁸⁹ UN Women, *About UN Women*.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, *2018 - 2019 Women’s Entrepreneurship Report*, 2019.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

cent of women do worldwide.”⁹⁴ This information further demonstrates why promoting gender equality through entrepreneurship and investment is actively a part of the yearly ECOSOC agenda.⁹⁵

According to *Pursuing Women’s Economic 2018 Report* by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), discussion on topics promoting gender equality require the perspective on how women contribute to the global economy.⁹⁶ The report states that when more women are working, economies grow and moreover, signifies that the economic empowerment of women increases economic diversification, productivity, and income equality.⁹⁷ To further understand the economic empowerment of women, an understanding of the legal landscape is necessary, according to the World Bank Group’s *Women Business, and The Law 2020* report, legal barriers are often preventing gender equality.⁹⁸ The findings of this report show that on average, women have only 75% of the legal rights afforded to men.⁹⁹ Such legal barriers are defined by the World Bank Group as restricting, stating that in order to encourage greater entrepreneurial opportunities for women, reformation of discriminatory laws inhibiting women are necessary.¹⁰⁰ The World Bank Group calls these legal barriers ‘discriminatory’ and expresses the limitation of world GDP when business environments do not reflect gender equality.¹⁰¹ UN affiliated groups such as the World Bank call to attention the historical reoccurrences to promote gender equality through policy within Member States.¹⁰²

International and Regional Framework

ECOSOC’s work on promoting gender equality is foundationally based on CSW and *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly.¹⁰³ CEDAW is referenced in many UN resolutions as it was one of the first, internationally recognized historic documents addressing gender discrimination, gender-based violence, and calling action to create an international strategy to address issues directly impacting women and has been designated by the UN General Assembly as an international bill of rights for women.¹⁰⁴ Member States who have ratified the convention have committed to taking measures to incorporate equality into their legal systems, creating and maintaining public institutions that ensure the protection of women, and to ensure that gender-based violence is eliminated by people, the private sector, and organizations.¹⁰⁵ In 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* was endorsed by the attending governments and endorsed by the General Assembly in its 50th Session.¹⁰⁶ The Beijing Declaration was deemed one of the most progressive commitments to promoting gender-equality of its time and an affirmation of women’s rights worldwide and a dedicated international commitment to fighting gender inequality.¹⁰⁷ According to a 2014 report produced by UN Women on the implementation of the Platform of Action, it recognizes 12 critical areas of concern that focus on poverty; education and training; health; violence; armed conflict; economy; power and decision-making; institutional mechanisms; human rights; media; environment; and the girl child.¹⁰⁸

In 2015, attendees at the Third Annual Financing for Development Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* which encouraged action plans designed to incorporate and

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ International Monetary Fund, *Pursuing Women’s economic empowerment*, 2018.

⁹⁸ World Bank Group, *Women, Business, and The Law 2020*, 2020.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ UN General Assembly, *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (A/RES/34/180), 1979.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ The Fourth Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, 2015.

align financial flows and policies with economic, social, and environmental priorities.¹⁰⁹ The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* established the annual ECOSOC forum on financing for development.¹¹⁰

In the report of the Secretary-General on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2019/54)” data on observation of the UN system’s work to promote gender equality indicates that socio-economic areas such as, the cross-section of poverty and lack of gender equality, are being targeted with increased measures to include multiple SDGs in their processes.¹¹¹ In 2019, the Secretary-General submitted another report to ECOSOC on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2019/54),” highlighting key milestones within the UN system regarding the promoting of gender equality.¹¹² The report also signified areas in which behavioral change and integration of a gender perspective could be encouraged in daily life.¹¹³

Role of the International System

ECOSOC coordinates the work of 14 UN specialized agencies to address and implement the SDGs.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, ECOSOC is heavily involved in the implementation and monitoring of progress towards the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹¹⁵ In recent years, ECOSOC has held High-Level Political Forums on Sustainable Development, the ECOSOC Finance for Development Forum, the SDGs Investing Fair, and the Multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs.¹¹⁶ The aforementioned meetings were held with the common purpose of convening Member States on a specific aspect of sustainable development in the UN System. The UN System and its affiliated organizations such as UN Women and CSW provide research, policy framework, and toolkits designed to promote the SDGs.¹¹⁷

With CSW’s mandate to, “prepare recommendations on promoting women’s rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields,” it works to meet on a yearly basis to monitor progress achieved and issues encountered in the implementation of the *Beijing Declaration* and of the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly of 2000 outlined in Resolution S-23/3 on “Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action” to support gender mainstreaming.¹¹⁸ CSW also contributes to the review and progress towards the 2030 Agenda by providing analysis of specific Member State’s gender equality initiatives.¹¹⁹ At the 63rd session of CSW in 2019, the summary report indicates emphasis on strengthening normative, legal and policy frameworks, strengthening women’s and girl’s access to social protection, strengthening access to public services for women and girls, and making infrastructure work for women and girls.¹²⁰ UN Women is called upon to continue its efforts and encouraged to continue to take a central role in promoting gender equality in

¹⁰⁹ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ UN ECOSOC, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system, Report of the Secretary-General (E/2019/54)*, 2019

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ UN Women, *Sessional meetings of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)*.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ CSW, *Commission on the Status of Women 64th Session Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly (2000)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 2000.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Commission on the Status of Women Report on the sixty-third session (23 March 2018 and 11–22 March 2019) (E/2019/27)*, 2019.

coordinating with the UN System and in the mobilization of civil society, hiring agencies, the private sector, and trade unions.¹²¹

Before the creation of UN-Women, the UN system struggled to address issues such as inadequate funding and no specifically recognized or mandated entity to drive work towards the promoting of gender equality globally.¹²² In 2010, The UN General Assembly created UN Women to address the specific challenges that prevent or disable Member States from addressing gender equality.¹²³ UN Women aims to address increasing the amount of women leaders and participants in governance systems, ensuring that women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy, all women and girls live a life that is free of gender based violence and discrimination, and advocating for the contributions that women have greater influence in sustainable peace building.¹²⁴

The following organizations are affiliated directly to the UN System and have mandates or reports related to promoting gender equality through investment and entrepreneurship. The International Labor Organization (ILO) supplies ECOSOC, UN Women, and CSW with data and analysis on how labor law and policy are affecting micro and macro economies.¹²⁵ The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) goal is to promote equality and opportunity for all by working with policy makers, citizens, and governments to find solutions on international challenges such as promoting gender equality.¹²⁶ Other relevant organizations that supply reporting and statistics to inform ECOSOC focus areas include: The International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank Group, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹²⁷

The ILO has yearly reports that help to form and evaluate policy for Member States, such as *Women at Work: Trends 2019*, that highlight how women have or have not been economically empowered.¹²⁸ The ILO helps evaluate policies for Member States by providing an analysis in the form of case studies.¹²⁹ For instance, the *Women at Work: Trends 2019* report shows measurable outcomes of policy as to better inform bodies such as ECOSOC in their discussion of economic and labor related topics.¹³⁰ Additionally, ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development Programme (ILO-WED) works with financial service providers and others to build their capacity to support Women entrepreneurs in developing countries.¹³¹ The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) wrote a report regarding the gender pay gap called *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now* in 2012 that was designed to provide guidance to Member States to work towards gender equality through policy specific to regional and local contexts.¹³²

ECOSOC, CSW, and UN Women have placed emphasis on how to address multiple SDGs through the implementation of certain policies which could extend the impact on work towards the 2030 Agenda.¹³³ Emphasis from relevant bodies has helped encourage Member States to implement frameworks that support increased access to technology for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) citizens and the creation and the bolstering of public private partnerships.¹³⁴

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ ILO, *Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED) Programme*.

¹²⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, *Who we are*.

¹²⁷ UN Womenwatch, *Directory of UN Resources on Gender and Women's Issues*.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development, *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*, 2012.

¹³³ UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries Report*, 2019.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Access to Technology in Promoting Gender Equality

The UNDP states that women entrepreneurs encounter more barriers than men in gaining access to technology, financial services, credit, and networks.¹³⁵ UN organs and bodies have recognized access to technology as a method of promoting gender equality in the SDGs and other bodies such as the UNDP.¹³⁶ Entities such as UN Women and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) have at worked towards providing women of different socio-economic backgrounds with access to technology.¹³⁷ Technologies such as smart phones, laptops, and network connection have notably helped women entrepreneurs seek investment and growth opportunities.¹³⁸ Additionally, access to a network or internet, is seen as access to knowledge because it provides an avenue for women to seek information without societal or cultural barriers.¹³⁹ According to the report published by the ITU, *Fast forward progress: leveraging tech to achieve the global goals*, using technology can not only enhance the immediate circumstance of a women in the workforce or a women entrepreneur, it can provide an avenue for gaining other skills related to manufacturing and enhanced productivity.¹⁴⁰ The report by ITU further points out that access to internet is being tested expanded in the developing world, with participation from both the public and private sectors, in order to “extend access to and use of the internet.”¹⁴¹ The report further draws attention to lack internet access for women, stating that, “there are some 250 million fewer women online than men, and the gap is widening”.¹⁴² The report also acknowledges that access to the internet remains to be connected to the developed world, stating that nearly 4 billion people, over half of the world population have not connected to the internet.¹⁴³ The report summarizes the concerns that access to resources online is vital to ensuring that women and girls are not left behind in a growing digitally dependent world and can propel women and children to explore their interests and gain new opportunities by having access to the internet.¹⁴⁴

Technology not only serves women in a social and cultural way, it is also a tool for providing equitable access to growing a business.¹⁴⁵ Technology can have specific relevance in LDCs because it often provides women with access to a greater market which can aid in increasing the quality of life for Women Owned Enterprise’s (WOEs).¹⁴⁶ Internet access can also provide WOE’s with social security which reinforces their equality within their individual cultures and societies.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, access to the internet can connect WOE’s to investment or growth opportunities.¹⁴⁸ WOE’s in Ghana showed that acting collectively can give groups of women entrepreneurs the ability to pool resources, labor, assets and increase access to technology.¹⁴⁹ In urban and rural areas, collectives of women producers have been effective tools in garnering tools to compete in local markets and in accesses government resources.¹⁵⁰ By acting collectively, WOE’s on average earned 81% more than their counterparts outside the collective, gained access to more choice in the management and access to credit.¹⁵¹

¹³⁵ UNDP, *Gender Equality and Sustainable Development*.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ ITU, *Fast forward progress: leveraging tech to achieve the global goals*, 2017.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ UN Women, *Reshaping the future: Women, girls, ICTs and the SDGs*, 2017.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ UNCTAD, *Empowering Women Entrepreneurs Through Information and Communications Technology*, 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Public Private Partnerships

ECOSOC has discussed the potential and recent successes of public private partnerships for sustainable development in resolutions, reports, and in implementation of programs in Member States at a recent meeting available as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on “Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2019/54).”¹⁵² According to UNCTAD’s *2019 Least Developed Countries Report*, financial institutions were asked in the 2030 Agenda to look for innovative ways of promoting gender equality in their investments.¹⁵³ For instance, the Office for Development Assistance (ODA) has been working to establish new language around the private sector being involved in sustainable development as to have it consistent with the language present in the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*.¹⁵⁴ LDCs are oftentimes seen as specific beneficiaries of the private sector investing in sustainable development as the impact on the world’s most disadvantaged is evident.¹⁵⁵ There is controversy around how subsidizing the private sector to invest in LDCs could cause unfavorable market structures or could jeopardize competition.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, partnering with Member States directly, versus the ODA, has become an option.¹⁵⁷

UN Women has worked to develop partnerships and commitments from the private sector through initiatives such as the HeforShe Campaign.¹⁵⁸ HeforShe brought together Heads of State, corporate champions, university champions, and thematic champions to address gender equality policy in their institutions, justice systems, organizational cultures, and policies associated with the previously mentioned groups.¹⁵⁹ The HeforShe campaign has garnered public and private support from both elected officials and corporate leaders to advance gender equality.¹⁶⁰ At the 2018 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, “Partnering for Resilient and Inclusive Societies: Contributions of the Private Sector,” attendees from the private sector came away with new expectations about not only their financial contributions, but how they can participate in sharing expertise and technology to achieve Sustainable Development.¹⁶¹ As shown at the 2018 ECOSOC Partnership Forum, the private sector understands the potential of inclusive and equal agenda as it has shown to be more profitable.¹⁶² Investing in sustainable development is seen as good business practice.¹⁶³ Furthermore, aligning business strategy with the SDGs is an extension of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which has historically been a driving force in acquiring funding and measurable impact regarding business practices and sustainable development.¹⁶⁴

The finance industry has seen the opportunity and benefit of practicing CSR through aligning business practices to the SDGs.¹⁶⁵ Giving equitable access to lines of credit, loans, and accounting services can enhance WOE’s ability to grow and adapt to changing markets while also expanding their service or product.¹⁶⁶ ILO’s WED empowers women through working directly with financial service providers to increase their capacity to support women entrepreneurs.¹⁶⁷ WED also works to give women entrepreneurs access to information and networks.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ UN Women, *2019 Impact Report: HeForShe*, 2019.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ UN ECOSOC, *ECOSOC Partnership Forum, “Partnering for Resilient and Inclusive Societies: Contributions of the Private Sector”*, 2018.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

Conclusion

In the year 2020, ECOSOC will once again review progress towards the SDGs, continue to work towards financing the SDGs, and looking ahead to address new and relevant topics affecting social and economic policy in UN Member States.¹⁶⁹ Though the UN system has resources for promoting gender equality through investment and entrepreneurship, the implementation of these resources falls to Member State's and their work in bodies like ECOSOC.¹⁷⁰ According to the reporting highlighted by the ILO and other relevant bodies, there is still much to be done to give women equal economic opportunity.¹⁷¹ Access to technology and the increase of Public-private Partnerships to promote gender equality can bring about economic empowerment for women as highlighted in ECOSOC resolutions, international bodies and their reporting, and academia's research contributions.¹⁷²

Further Research

When considering how ECOSOC can promote gender equality through entrepreneurship and investment, delegates should consider the following: How does Gender Equality promote other SDGs? What is ECOSOC's capacity to promote gender equality? How can ECOSOC work with CSW and UN Women to address gender equality? Is there additional reporting needed for ECOSOC to fulfill its mandate to promote gender equality? How will ECOSOC measure the economic empowerment of women?

Annotated Bibliography

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This report was created to be presented by the International Monetary Fund at the G7 Meeting of G7 Ministers and Central Bank Governors in June of 2018. It highlights the need for economic empowerment for women especially as it relates to tailoring policy to Member State's circumstances. This source can be used to provide recent policy implementation and the progress of such policy. Delegates can use this source to build an understanding of the International Monetary Fund's role in their assigned Member State.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2012). *Closing the Gender Gap: Act Now*. Retrieved 14 February 2020 from: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/close-the-gender-gap-now_9789264179370-en#page3

This report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development was written in 2012 as a toolkit for Member States who express a desire to combat gender inequality in their Member State. This report can be used to show delegates a history of the topic from the perspective of all sides of the issue, not just how it relates to employment and entrepreneurship. It also can be used to provide credible statistics of the gender gap. This report was created to be presented by the International Monetary Fund at the G7 Meeting of G7 Ministers and Central Bank Governors in June of 2018. It highlights the need for economic empowerment for women especially as it relates to tailoring policy to Member State's circumstances. This source can be used to provide recent policy implementation and the progress of such policy. Delegates can use this source to build an understanding of the International Monetary Fund's role in their assigned Member State.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. (n.d.). *Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment*. Retrieved 14 February 2020 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures>

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

This page on the UN website publishes up-to-date statistics about how empowering women economically provides many global, regional, and national benefits. This source will be particularly helpful in designing the current state of the topic in reference to current policy as well as a look at what could be if certain initiatives are taken up by Member States. Delegates can use this source to find other sources as it provides many helpful links to relevant reports and United Nations organs.

United Nations, General Assembly, Thirty-fourth session. (1979). *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. Adopted on the report of the Third Committee (A/34/830). Retrieved 1 June 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/34/180>

Deemed as the first document to give the UN system direction toward the mainstreaming of gender perspective in all UN entities. This convention gave new perspective to the movement to not only protect women but give them equal opportunity in all parts of life including employment, participation in government, and protection against gender-based violence. Delegate can use this source as one of the major starting points for the UN's contemporary processes in regard to promoting gender equality system wide.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2015). *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*. Retrieved 25 March 2020 from: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/69/313>

Established in 2015, the Addis Adaba Action Agenda called for increased funding from Member States and the private sector to financial support sustainable development. The way a Member State interacted with the Addis Adaba Action Agenda and either does or does not continue to reference its principles, is telling the financial ability of that State and/or the belief that financing development is crucial. Delegates can use this source to understand how public-private partnerships are interacting for the financing of gender equality.

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II. Combating Illicit Trafficking of Precious Metals and Other Natural Resources

*Environment is no one's property to destroy; it's everyone's responsibility to protect.*¹⁷³

Introduction

Illicit trafficking does not only involve the illegal movement of goods but also encompasses corruption throughout various levels of governance, money laundering, and illegal migration.¹⁷⁴ It is also linked to transnational organized crime (TOC), which is repeatedly tied to human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, child labor, and environmental degradation.¹⁷⁵ The funding of TOC is oftentimes the result of laundered money that involves the smuggling of precious metals, such as gold.¹⁷⁶ According to the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), the definition of illicit trafficking in precious metals is determined as the illegal mining, buying and sale of illicit goods, and the trafficking of goods through various legal and illegal networks.¹⁷⁷ Oftentimes the methods of procuring the resources do not stay in the hands of illegal groups but becomes part of the mainstream purchasing power of the economy; this occurs when illegally procured precious metals such as mercury and gold are sold for legal profits to benefit illegal enterprises, and was often seen in the mining and selling of conflict diamonds to the international market.¹⁷⁸ The movement of metals and natural resources illegally can often be linked to financing of TOCs and can create further instability in high-risk regions.¹⁷⁹ Activities that degrade the environment have also led to adverse impacts such as toxic water run-off, along with other environmental concerns.¹⁸⁰ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has placed an emphasis to address the rise in illicit trafficking of precious metals and natural resources but also the far-reaching effects produced by illegal procurement and selling of these items.¹⁸¹ ECOSOC began the process of a greater comprehensive approach towards combating the illicit trafficking of precious metals and other natural resources in the 2013 resolution 2013/38, "Combating transnational organized crime and its possible links to illicit trafficking in precious metals and illegal mining, including by enhancing the security of supply chains of precious metals," which emphasized cooperation through knowledge sharing amongst Member States, regional groups, and other relevant actors.¹⁸²

ECOSOC also addresses the illicit trafficking of metals and natural resources through outlining solutions that emphasize the importance in mitigating and stopping not only the environmental but also social and economic concerns.¹⁸³ Theme addresses within these areas include TOCs, strengthening cooperation amongst intergovernmental groups, Member States, and other relevant actors.¹⁸⁴ These resolutions have also acknowledged that in order to mitigate illicit trafficking of precious metals and other natural resources, applying current and new technologies is necessary and paramount in combating TOCs and applying greater transparent governance.¹⁸⁵ New technologies, including the use of satellite observation data of geographical changes, help identify illegal mining sites and the use of tracking measures in the supply chain in order to maintain transparency and authenticity of procured goods from the original source to the final buyer.¹⁸⁶ These new methods have been used to help combat illicit mining that has

¹⁷³ Zafar, *EcoMena: 15 Inspirational Quotes On The Environment*, 2017.

¹⁷⁴ UNICRI, *Combating transnational organized crime and its links to illicit trafficking in precious metals and illegal mining, including by enhancing the security of supply chains of precious metals*, 2019.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ UNICRI, *Strengthening the Security and Integrity of the Precious Metals Supply Chain*, 2016.

¹⁷⁷ UNICRI, *Promoting an international strategy to combat illicit trafficking in precious metals*, 2017.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² UN ECOSOC, *Combating transnational organized crime and its possible links to illicit trafficking in precious metals (E/RES/2013/38)*, 2013.

¹⁸³ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity (A/RES/68/193)*, 2013.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ Goldberg, *How Satellite Data Can Fight Illegal Mining in Ghana*, 2019.

resulted from the demand for precious metals and natural resources and has also aided Member States in moving forward to stopping illegal mining and illicit resources procurement.¹⁸⁷

International and Regional Framework

In 2013, ECOSOC adopted resolution 2013/38, “Combating transnational organized crime and its possible links to illicit trafficking in precious metals,” where it emphasized the necessity of collaboration between Member States, the public and private sector, and civil society by calling focus towards the mobilizing strategies and measures aimed at enabling collective action between relevant groups.¹⁸⁸ Such collaboration efforts focused on activities such as mitigating unethical mining and business practices of those participating in the procurement and distribution of precious metals and natural resources, and ensuring guidelines for protection of both the environment and good governance were being adhered.¹⁸⁹ *The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto* calls for combating against TOCs activities such as illicit trafficking by strengthening cooperation amongst regional, intergovernmental (IGOs), and international bodies through measures such as providing shared knowledge of best practices in combating trafficking of smuggled goods.¹⁹⁰ This is further emphasized in General Assembly resolution 66/181, “Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity,” which emphasized the exchange of information in terms of best practices, technical assistance, international cooperation, and the inclusion of not only the public but also the private sector as well.¹⁹¹ An example in requesting technical assistance can be seen in General Assembly resolution 68/193 on “Strengthening the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular its technical cooperation capacity” which discussed methods of strengthening the UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme by following the recommendations from the Global Programme against Money-Laundering, Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism.¹⁹²

The European Union (EU) in response to the concerns of illicit trafficking, adopted Regulation (EU) 2017/821, which called for a standard of regulation throughout the EU focused on safeguarding due diligence in the supply train, in particular focus towards the importing of precious metals with origin sources from conflict-affected and high-risk regions.¹⁹³ In General Assembly resolution 68/194, “United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders,” it recommends strengthening the UN African Institute for the Prevention of Crime as a means to help combat regional TOCs in exacerbated regions such as throughout Africa.¹⁹⁴ Recently, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ECOSOC adopted resolution E/2019/23 “Combating transnational organized crime and its possible links to illicit trafficking in precious metals and illegal mining, including by enhancing the security of supply chains of precious metals,” which emphasized that measures used towards combating the effects caused illicit trafficking of natural resources and other metals should highlight SDGs in its new processes.¹⁹⁵ Processes include greater protective measures for the environment and communities in mining locations, ensuring that protective measures for high-risk groups, such as women and migrant workers, and transparent governance in judicial and legislative procedures.¹⁹⁶ The resolution encourages Member States to work with the UNICRI, United Nations Office

¹⁸⁷ Dixon, *The role of forensic geology in the illicit precious metals trade*, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (A/RES/55/25)*, 2000.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ European Union, *Regulation (EU) 2017/821 of the European Parliament and of the Council*, 2017.

¹⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (A/RES/68/194)*, 2013.

¹⁹⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Combating transnational organized crime and its links to illicit trafficking in precious metals and illegal mining, including by enhancing the security of supply chains of precious metals (E/RES/2019/23)*, 2019.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and other UN bodies to obtain technical assistance and promote information sharing, aligning with SDGs 12, 16, and 17.¹⁹⁷

Role of the International System

One of ECOSOC's primary roles in the UN is fostering cooperation among various agencies and IGOs, non-governmental organizations, Member States, and regional bodies.¹⁹⁸ This helps facilitate the creation of tools for effective and sustainable legislative and policy success, and collaboration amongst Member States.¹⁹⁹ In this approach, ECOSOC has highlighted the importance of meeting the SDGs in order to fully confront the issues of environmental degradation, human rights violations, and illegal activities.²⁰⁰ Groups such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), UNODC, and various other entities provide varying degrees of technical assistance, guidance, and capacity support to Member States.²⁰¹ Examples of other technical resources that can help guide policy and decision-making include UNICRI's National Precious Metals Action Plan and Strengthening the Security and Integrity of the Precious Metal Supply Chain.²⁰²

The Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade (TRACIT) has encouraged creating long-term and sustainable solutions aimed towards alleviating the humanitarian and environmental impact of small scale and large scale mining by reinforcing existing regulatory and legislative frameworks to highlight SDGs within its policies that would work towards creating safer and more stable mining conditions, while also resistant against TOC activity.²⁰³ In TRACIT's recent publication, *Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the Sustainable Development Goals*, TRACIT highlights the lack of integrating the SDGs when addressing the ramifications of illicit trafficking of precious metals and other natural resources, and that including the SDGs into solutions to combat the illicit trafficking in precious metals will aid in meeting the SDGs.²⁰⁴ UN Security Council resolution 2195 (2014) on "Threats to international peace and security" emphasized the mitigation of illicit trade involving natural resources, metals, and minerals as necessary in order to stem the flow of TOCs, and the cooperation amongst regional groups such as the African Union, in regions that are resource abundant, is an important component.²⁰⁵ This is illustrated by INTERPOL in its work towards stemming the flow of illicitly procured minerals and other natural resources in order to rectify the supply train transparency and reduced the profits of TOCs.²⁰⁶ UNODC's Global Programme against Money-Laundering also helps provide Member States with the necessary and relevant knowledge and expertise to establish effective provisions and policies aimed at countering TOCs, in particular money-laundering.²⁰⁷

Supply Chain Transparency

In order to combat the growing economy of illicitly trafficked metals and natural resources, the OECD encourages highlighting the prevalent nature of TOCs and the concerns diverting potentially unviable, illegally obtained, and counterfeit products into the supply chain and eventually into the main economy of the global community.²⁰⁸ With many mining and production facilities for precious metals and natural resources often found in high-risk and conflict-affected areas, concerns of instability in said regions

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Transnational Alliance to Combat Illicit Trade, *Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2019.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 5.

²⁰⁵ UN Security Council, *Threats to international peace and security (S/RES/2195 (2014))*, 2014.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

contain the potential for encouraging TOC financing, human rights violations, and environmental degradation.²⁰⁹ The OECD, in its report on *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High Risk Areas*, called on the private sector and Member States to increase their due diligence in order to combat acts of illicit trafficking encouraged relevant actors throughout the supply chain to follow guidelines aimed towards addressing the lack of transparency starting from supplier and ending to consumers.²¹⁰ The OECD provides technical and logistical support for Member States and public and private sectors to aid public enterprises and private businesses in creating stronger company management systems, identify and assess risks in the supply chain, design and implement a response strategy for potential and identified risks, encourage third party inspections and reviews, and to report annual of the proceedings in the supply chain.²¹¹ The OECD further encourages Member States, when managing legislative and local processes, to safeguard the supply chain starting from miners, to exporters, and retail business.²¹²

Experts have identified that forensic geology can help improve the protection of products by creating identifiers on the potential illicit goods so that companies can verify their products while ensuring the supply chain is safe from outside disturbances.²¹³ UNICRI provides technical advice for Member States and relevant actors to encourage legislative measures aimed towards emulating the National Precious Metals Action Plan, which would aid in supply chain transparency but also in minimizing the role of TOCs.²¹⁴ The National Precious Metals Action Plan is an assessment tool encouraged by UNICRI to provide an outline that works towards capacity building for Member States and regional groups that aid in achieving greater transparency of the mining processes.²¹⁵ These processes include identifying key risk areas throughout the precious metals supply chain, analyzing potential gaps that can hinder the full application of the National Precious Metals Action Plan, such as legislation, enforcement, and possible points of corruption or fraud, and ensuring violations of human rights and environmental protections remain significant.²¹⁶ Applications such as forensic geology would result in “forensic fingerprinting techniques,” would allow for the recognition of specific precious metal metals and has shown promise in improving supply chain transparency and in ensuring the quality and origin of the precious metal.²¹⁷

Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Illicit trafficking of precious metals and other natural resources would not only hinder the ability for many countries in achieving the SDGs but would directly forestall any progress made and hamper work towards achieving SDG 16.²¹⁸ Specifically, SDG 16 would be hindered due to greater TOC activity, which would lead to insecurity in the governance of Member States and provide opportunity for increase conflict in high-risk zones.²¹⁹ The inability to achieve meaningful progress towards the benchmarks of SDG 16 would damage the integrity in legal institutions and destabilize countries leading to a deterioration of economic health and human rights violations.²²⁰ TOC activities often weaken justice systems and governmental institutions, but are also indicators in the lack of due diligence and transparency in implementing legislation.²²¹ The report *Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the Sustainable Development Goals* highlighted the significance of SDG 16 in combating illicit trafficking of precious

²⁰⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*, 2013.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *A Global Standard Towards responsible mineral supply chains*, 2011.

²¹² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Responsible mineral supply chains – OECD Portal for Supply Chain Risk Information*, 2018.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid, p. 100.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p. 100.

²²⁰ Ibid, p. 100.

²²¹ Ibid.

metals and other natural resources.²²² The report further notes the “socio-economic impacts,” such as dampening of the private sector, that will occur if illicit trafficking of resources continues to occur.²²³ In order for current and future institutions and governments to take lead on good governance and due diligence, measures such as greater transparency, coordination of action amongst relevant State, public, and private actors, shared knowledge on best policies and practices, and assessment tools need to be improved.²²⁴

An example of detriments caused by illegal mining and trafficking of precious metals can be seen in the Verité publication entitled *Summary of key trafficking in persons issues in gold production*.²²⁵ The publication reported an increase in labor trafficking, as well as child and sex trafficking due to the continue activity of illegal mining of gold.²²⁶ The results from the summary further highlighted the analysis made in TRACIT’s report, *Mapping the Impact of Illicit Trade on the Sustainable Development Goals*, when it reiterated that if TOCs continued, it would corrode not only the stability of the affected region, but would result in greater activities involving terrorist groups, loss of good governance, and would undermine global efforts in achieving SDG 16.²²⁷ The recommendations outlined in UNEP’s report, *The Rise of Environmental Crime: A growing Threat to Natural Resources, Peace, Development and Security*, identified potential solutions that could be used towards addressing the negative impact that resulted from illicit procurement and trafficking of goods.²²⁸ UNEP encouraged Member States and regions affected to look towards enhancing legislative frameworks aimed towards policy adherence for those seeking greater emphasis to be placed on environmental regulatory policies to enhance achievement of the SDGs, with SDG 16 as a cornerstone in highlighting the necessity of protecting and enhancing good governance, and to increase awareness and incentives for both public and private sector to ensure policy follow through.²²⁹

Conclusion

The ramifications of illicit trade and trafficking of natural resources has been linked to the laundering of funds for illegal activities such as drug trafficking, trafficking in humans, financing terrorism, degradation of the environment, and unethical human labor.²³⁰ The continued trafficking of precious metals and other natural resources undermines the ability of governments to maintain safe and fair mining practices, adhere to human rights, further delays efforts towards sustainability, and propagates greater TOC activities.²³¹ ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies continue to work towards providing effective strategies for regional groups and Member States with the SDGs streamlined throughout the process.²³² These strategies include providing technical assistance, sharing best practices amongst IGOs, international, and regional groups, and ensuring transparency in legislation and law in order to combat the illicit transfer of natural resources.²³³ As discourse continues on the multifaceted range in addressing the illicit trafficking of precious metals and other natural resources throughout the international community, new solutions and discussions remain relevant.²³⁴

Further Research

Moving forward, delegates should consider questions such as: what has led to the difficulty in restricting the flow of illicit trafficking of precious metals and natural resources? What can be done to strengthen the

²²² Ibid, p. 100.

²²³ Ibid, p. 9.

²²⁴ UNEP, *The Rise of Environmental Crime: A growing Threat to Natural Resources, Peace, Development and Security*, 2016.

²²⁵ Verite, *Summary of Key Trafficking in Persons Issues in Gold Production*, 2017.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid, 2019.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid, p. 100.

²³¹ Ibid, p. 100.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

role of regional partners and groups in combating illegal mining and trade of said goods? Would an emphasis towards transparency in business practices and legislation help equip Member States in combating illegal sales and procurement of illicit goods? What role can business do in order to maintain integrity in their supply chains in order to counteract the movement of said illicit goods? How can Member States, IGOs, and regional group function together in order to reduce TOCs?

Annotated Bibliography

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https://unctad.org/meetings/en/Contribution/DITC2020_TRACIT_IllicitTradeandSDGs_fullreport_en.pdf

This report provides an analysis on the impacts to the Sustainable Development Goals achievement in regard to combating illicit trafficking of resources. It provides a breakdown to better understand how each goal is affected for different areas of illicit trafficking. This offers a resource for delegates to better understand how direct corporations amongst relevant bodies and between Member States and regional groups towards more effective strategies can be achieved.

United Nations Environment Programme. (2016). *The Rise of Environmental Crime: A growing Threat to Natural Resources, Peace, Development and Security*. Retrieved 16 February 2020 from:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7662/->

[The rise of environmental crime A growing threat to natural resources peace%2C development and security-2016environmental_crimes.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/7662/-The_rise_of_environmental_crime_A_growing_threat_to_natural_resources_peace%2C_development_and_security-2016environmental_crimes.pdf.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

This study focuses on providing suggestions in combating the illicit crimes made on the environment. It emphasizes issues of security, violations of environmental laws, TOCs, and corruption as causes towards the continued acts of illicit trafficking of natural resources and the subsequent results due to it. The report offers suggestions as to effective measures to reduce violations to the environment and measures for relevant actors to apply in order to potentially stem the flow of TOCs.

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. (2016). *Strengthening the Security and Integrity of the Precious Metals Supply Chain*. Retrieved 16 February 2020 from:

http://files.unicri.it/PM_draft_onlinev.pdf

The study assesses the links between TOCs and related acts of illicit trafficking of resources. It provides strategies to prevent and combat illegitimate sources of minerals and metals. It provides an analysis of initiatives currently in place on the national and international level that have worked to address illicit trafficking and its effectiveness on various levels of governance. The study also discusses a key concern when addressing supply chain transparency that has hindered effective combating of illegal procurement of precious metals. This report will help delegates to better understand the potential vulnerabilities supply chains face and must work to rectify to enable greater transparency.

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. (2017). *Promoting an international strategy to combat illicit trafficking in precious metals*. Retrieved 16 February 2020 from:

http://www.unicri.it/special_topics/metals_gemstones/Preliminary_Desk_Review.pdf

This review helps delegates to better understand the definition of illicit trafficking and related terms towards it. It offers a clear breakdown as to the scope of the issue, the challenges, and possible solutions to the related issues. The review provides an analysis as to the various factors in the possible implementation of an international network that could be used with to addressing TOCs.

Verite. (2017). *Summary of Key Trafficking in Persons Issues in Gold Production*. Retrieved 16 March 2020 from: <https://www.verite.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SSA-Verite-Commodity-Report-Gold.pdf>

This document provides a breakdown of the supply chain in terms of those most affected due to illicit trafficking. It further analyzes key concerns involved in small-scale mining that is most often associated with illicit mining and the effects caused due to the illegal practice on the surrounding area, particularly on vulnerable groups. It highlights the

increased concerns in high risk issues of sexual and gender-based violence, hazardous working conditions, child and migrant labour, and corruption. It will help delegates to better grasp who and what is most vulnerable through the lens of gold in sub-Saharan Africa.

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