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Commission for Social Development Committee Background Guide 2022

Written by Anthony Bassey, Lucy Kuchma, and Alliyah L. Edwards



NATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2022 National Model United Nations Conference in Washington, DC (NMUN•DC)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD). This year's staff is Director Anthony Bassey and Assistant Director Lucy Kuchma. The topics under discussion for CSocD are:

1. Addressing the Global Housing Crisis
2. Leveraging Sport for Social Development

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to 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 Zachary Parker at usgzack.dc@nmun.org or Secretary-General Adam Wolf at secgen.dc@nmun.org.

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

Sincerely,
Anthony Bassey, Director
Lucy Kuchma, Assistant Director



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Committee Overview

Introduction

The Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is a key actor in the United Nations (UN) system on matters of “efforts of the United Nations in the social field towards supporting and strengthening independent social and economic development.”¹ Since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the Commission has been tasked with monitoring the implementation of the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development* (1995) and *Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development* (1995).² The *United Nations Report of the World Summit for Social Development* (1995) provided a definition for social development and emphasized that, while intertwined with economic development and environmental protection, social development is about considering the needs of people as a core component of development.³ The report also highlighted poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion as key elements that must be addressed in social policy and development.⁴ The UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) further defines social development as “processes of change that lead to improvements in human well-being, social relations, and social institutions, and that are equitable, sustainable, and compatible with principles of democratic governance and social justice.”⁵ These definitions help demonstrate the wide purview that CSocD oversees in the international system as an advisor to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).⁶

Social progress, justice, and protections have been a priority of the UN since its inception in 1945 and were highlighted in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948.⁷ The UN reiterated its commitment to social development in 1969 with the *Declaration on Social Policy and Development*, which states that importance must be placed on individual human lives.⁸ Further, it goes on to address that social development cannot exist so long as cultural genocide and other injustices remain.⁹ These early documents highlight the UN’s commitment to social policy and development throughout its history, commitments that CSocD strives to further within its mandate.¹⁰

CSocD, originally called the Social Commission, was established in 1946 by ECOSOC resolution 10 (II) as a functional commission and expert body to advise on social policy.¹¹ Since then, both the Commission’s mandate and membership have been expanded to address a greater variety of issues; it has also become a forum for high-level panels concerning development.¹² The Commission views the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) as an opportunity to enhance its role within the UN system in promoting international development and monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.¹³ The body and its Bureau have identified inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, as an especially important issue that the Commission must address in the near future.¹⁴ Some of these issues include the accessibility to vaccines, providing more aid and food to nations in need, and proper education on healthcare and safety during the pandemic.¹⁵

¹ UN ECOSOC, *Reappraisal of the role of the Social Commission (E/RES/1139(XLI))*, 1966, p. 9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1996, p. 2.

⁵ UNRISD, *Social Development in an Uncertain World: UNRISD Research Agenda 2010-2014*, 2011, p. 2.

⁶ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

⁷ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/RES/2542 (XXIV))*, 1969.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹¹ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2021, p. 164.

¹² UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

¹³ *Commission on Social Development Discusses Role in Advancing SDGs*, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2016; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁴ UN CSocD, *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Governance, Structure, and Membership

CSocD is a functional commission of ECOSOC and thus reports directly to it.¹⁶ Its main responsibility is to address and advise on the more technical aspects of policy-making for ECOSOC in the area of social development, and it recommends draft resolutions for adoption by ECOSOC.¹⁷ CSocD is serviced by the Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD) of the UN Secretariat, which supports the Commission in collecting information on the effectiveness of international policy concerning social development.¹⁸ Further, the DSPD facilitates the intergovernmental process by resolving the logistical challenges that are necessary in organizing meetings and forums for the Commission.¹⁹ In accordance with a strategy that was reaffirmed in 2012, CSocD operates on a two-year review and policy cycle in which one session focuses primarily on analyzing policy and how it has shaped global social development, while the following set of meetings focuses on creating policy recommendations and draft resolutions.²⁰

CSocD has traditionally had a Bureau made up of one Chair and four Vice-Chairs to help set the agenda for the entire two-year policy cycle pursuant to ECOSOC decision 2002/210.²¹ Bureau members are elected at the first meeting of each regular session, which immediately follows the conclusion of the previous session, and serve for two consecutive meetings.²² For the 60th session, the Bureau chair was Ambassador María del Carmen Squeff of Argentina, who was joined by four vice-chairs in the Bureau who were elected at the beginning of the 59th session.²³ The vice-chairs who lead with Squeff, are Mr. Stefano Guerra, Ms. Hellen M. Chifwaila of Portugal (designate), Mr. Jiakun Guo of Zambia (designate), and Ms. Iwona Lula of China (designate).²⁴ Increasing the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Bureau has been a priority as the Commission continues to establish itself within the UN system.²⁵

The original membership of the Commission was 18; it has grown multiple times since the inaugural session, with its last expansion in 1996.²⁶ The current membership sits at 46 Member States.²⁷ Members are elected by ECOSOC to the Commission for four-year terms.²⁸ Membership is based on proportional regional representation and aims to ensure equality among all members involved, with 12 seats for African states, 10 for Asia-Pacific, five for Eastern Europe, nine for Latin America and the Caribbean, and 10 for Western Europe and other states.²⁹

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The current mandate of CSocD is to examine existing policy and propose new frameworks for the purposes of sustainable social development.³⁰ While the Commission's original mandate was to advise ECOSOC on matters related to social policy, CSocD has undergone significant transformation.³¹ The

¹⁶ UN ECOSOC, *Subsidiary Bodies of ECOSOC*.

¹⁷ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010; UN CSocD, *Report on the fifty-ninth session (E/2021/26-E/CN.5/2021/9)*, 2021.

¹⁸ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

¹⁹ UN DESA, **DESA Divisions**.

²⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development (E/RES/2021/8)*, 2020.

²¹ UN ECOSOC, *Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development (2002/210)*, 2002.

²² UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

²³ UN DESA, *60th session of the Commission for Social Development - CSocD60*, 2022.

²⁴ UN CSocD, *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development*.

²⁵ UN ECOSOC, *Improvement of the work of the Commission for Social Development (2002/210)*, 2002.

²⁶ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2020.

²⁷ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ UN DGC, *Poverty Remains World's Biggest Challenge, Social Development Commission Chair Says as Session Concludes with Approval of 3 Texts, Election of New Vice-Chairs (SOC/4837)*, 2016; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *United Nations Handbook 2021-22*, 2020.

³⁰ UN CSocD, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

³¹ Ibid.

most notable expansion of its mandate came in 1995 at the *World Summit for Social Development* in Copenhagen, when CSocD became the main body responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Summit's outcome documents, the *Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action* (1995).³² The Programme of Action renewed the call for a review of CSocD, strengthening the Commission as a policy advisory body that would examine and recommend changes in international frameworks concerning social development.³³ The three main themes of the Summit were poverty eradication, productive employment, and social integration.³⁴ Another outcome of the Summit was for ECOSOC to regularly review the Commission's role and strengthen its capacity.³⁵

In addition to its follow-up on the *Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action*, CSocD's mandate includes providing broad policy advice on issues of social development, anticipating potential issues in social development, making recommendations, promoting the exchange of information among social development stakeholders, and advising ECOSOC on the coordination of social development issues.³⁶ This mandate may continue to expand as the Commission defines its role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; it was endorsed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as valuable to achieving the SDGs through its specialized review and policy cycle, and continues to play a significant role in the pursuit of the SDGs.³⁷ It frequently invites field experts and UN leaders to participate in high-level discussion panels aimed at producing action-oriented recommendations to ECOSOC on sustainable development policy.³⁸

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

The 60th session of CSocD took place predominately online from the 7-16 February 2022 at the UN headquarters in New York.³⁹ The priority theme of the session was "Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda."⁴⁰ Addressing the continued and emerging issue of hunger due to the pandemic was at the forefront of the session's agenda, utilizing policies already implemented by Member States to help and eradicate hunger and poverty during the global pandemic and thereafter in all forms as a baseline to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁴¹ At the 60th session, the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Ms. Maria del Carmen Squeff of Argentina, led the discussion on the priority theme.⁴² Other vice-chairpersons assisted in the overall participation and preparation of the session and ensuring a successful outcome.⁴³ The members of the Bureau, included: Mr. Stefano Guerra of Portugal, Ms. Hellen M. Chifwaila of Zambia, Mr. Jiakun Guo of China, and Ms. Iwona Lula of Poland.⁴⁴ The panel discussed a plethora of issues leading to the recommendation of several draft resolutions.⁴⁵ The first draft resolution recommended at the session addressed the priority theme: "Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda," and contained further recommendations on policies changes.⁴⁶ Some of the policies included expansion of work opportunities and productivity in the various sectors, urban and rural, through investment of human

³² UN World Summit for Social Development, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, 1996, p. 84.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³⁴ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010, p. 2.

³⁵ UN World Summit for Social Development, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, 1996.

³⁶ UN DESA, *Mandate and Terms of Reference – CSocD*.

³⁷ UN DGC, *Poverty Remains World's Biggest Challenge, Social Development Commission Chair Says as Session Concludes with Approval of 3 Texts, Election of New Vice-Chairs (SOC/4837)*, 2016; UN DGC, *More Inclusive Governance, Greater Focus on Education Key for Building Post-Pandemic Resilience against Future Crises, Policy Experts Tell Social Development Commission*, UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2021.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁹ UN DESA, *60th session of the Commission for Social Development- CSocD60*, 2022.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

resources, the promotion of technology towards the growth of productive employment, and further promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship.⁴⁷ The draft resolution also suggested to Member States that there be some form of implementation of economic policies that support and empower women as they navigate through the labor market.⁴⁸ Further discussion in the session developed into drafts highlighted the increase in child labor as the global pandemic exacerbated inequalities in impoverished communities and urged Member States to further address the prohibition of child labor within national laws with the goal to eliminate child labor by 2025.⁴⁹ Continued discussions throughout the session also addressed new partnerships for Africa's development.⁵⁰ The draft resolution calls upon Member States to ratify the *United Nations Convention Against Corruption* (2003) and Member States were encouraged to work with development partners to strengthen health systems in the areas of personnel, information and data, research of infrastructure, an expansion of surveillance.⁵¹ Furthermore, the draft emphasizes the need for empowerment among African youth by mitigating unemployment, continued development of education, and skills training to better prepare the youth population for the work force.⁵² The draft resolution recognized the efforts that have been made regarding the partnerships with the African Union, but further emphasized how more efforts in the area of cross collaboration and accessibility of resources should be promoted by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General.⁵³

As many Member States continue to navigate COVID-19 and mitigate its effects on populations, the pandemic still remains prevalent in areas of the world.⁵⁴ The Commission recommended to ECOSOC that the priority theme of the sixty-first session should be one that covers the topic of full and productive employment and decent work, and overcoming inequalities to help with moving forward from COVID-19.⁵⁵ The Commission acknowledged that recovery from COVID-19 could present many opportunities for the development of integrated frameworks with regard to achieving the SDGs.⁵⁶ It also unanimously approved a draft resolution urging Member States to adopt a multitude of frameworks around the creation of decent work, improving social protection through coherence, the investment in early childhood education, and inequality.⁵⁷

Conclusion

CSocD has seen its mandate expand since 1946, which has given the Commission greater capacity to affect the global community.⁵⁸ Through its mandated cycle of monitoring and review of SDG progress, the Commission has an opportunity to recommend policies that will have a lasting impact on the entire international community.⁵⁹ With assistance from Division of Social Policy and Development (DSPD), the Commission is able to address a wide scope of issues pertaining to social development.⁶⁰ CSocD can address both economic and social development needs through reviewing, analyzing, and recommending international policy to ECOSOC.⁶¹ The Commission continues its efforts regarding eradicating poverty, improving early childhood education, and resiliency in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴⁷ ECOSOC, *Follow up on the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (E/CN.5/2022/3)*, 2022, p.12.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 13.

⁵⁰ ECOSOC, *Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (E/CN.5/2022/4)*, 2022, p.2.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.9.

⁵² Ibid, p.12.

⁵³ Ibid, p.14.

⁵⁴ UN DGC, *Social Development Commission Concludes Sixtieth Session, Sends 3 Texts to Economic and Social Council on Covid-19 Recovery. Decent Work for All*, 2022.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

⁵⁹ *Commission on Social Development Discusses Role in Advancing SDGs*, International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2016.

⁶⁰ UN DSPD, *What is the Commission for Social Development and What Should it Achieve?*, 2010.

⁶¹ Ibid.

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This news article highlights what the role of the Commission will be regarding the SDGs and their implementation. The comments from the UN Secretary-General indicate that the Commission will be vital in implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Further, CSocD will prioritize the SDGs during the next review and policy cycle. Delegates can use this source to understand what the Commission will have as their main priority for the next session and to understand its role in implementation of the SDGs.

United Nations, Commission for Social Development. (2022). *Commission for Social Development, 60th Session.* Retrieved 21 March 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/events/2022/commission-social-development-60th-session>

This source provides recent updates and information on the 60th session of CSocD and its outcomes. The site also includes information pertaining to discussions hosted around poverty, education, gender equality and moving forward post global pandemic. Additionally, this website provides further information on the recommendations posed by the commission and the adoption of the agenda for the sixtieth-first session that is set to take place in 2023. Furthermore, the website provides information on the various draft resolutions that were passed by the commission and where the committee plans on taking provisions in eradicating poverty in the near future.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD60.* Retrieved 20 March 2022 from:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/csod60.html>

This website details the proposed agenda and the relevant themes for the 2022 session of CSocD, which is scheduled to take place in February 2022 at the UN headquarters in New York. The theme “Inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda” specifies what the Commission’s priorities will be in the future. Delegates can also review the contributions of civil society groups to meeting preparation.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Commission for Social Development (CSocD).* Retrieved 20 March 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division.html>

This is the main overview from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs website on the Commission for Social Development. Here, relevant information can be found on the history of the committee including its membership, governance, and mandate. In addition, a full list of recent sessions and draft resolutions can be found at this link. This source should be used primarily to understand the Commission’s work and historical development.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.). *Mandate and Terms of Reference – CSocD.* Retrieved 20 March 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/united-nations-commission-for-social-development-csod-social-policy-and-development-division/mandate-and-terms-of-reference-csod.html>

This page from the website of DSPD, as part of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, clearly lays out the mandate of CSocD and highlights the different facets of its work. This resource explains the unique role CSocD plays in the UN system and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It also links to the Commission’s Programme of Work, session pages, key reports, and outcome documents. This source will be useful to delegates as it concretely defines the confines in which CSocD is intended to operate and can prevent proposals which fall outside of the body’s scope of work.

United Nations, World Summit for Social Development. (1995). *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*. Retrieved 21 March 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.166/9>
This document is a report on the proceedings of the 1995 Copenhagen Summit. The summit was monumental in discerning how the UN would address social development. It includes an agreement that not only codifies shared values, but also explains how the UN System could use those to improve social development throughout the global community. Because this summit has played a significant role in shaping CSocD's mandate, delegates may find this report useful for understanding how the Commission approaches social development.

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1. Addressing the Global Housing Crisis

“Access to housing is a precondition for access to employment, education, health, and social services. In order to address the current housing challenges, all levels of government should put housing at the center of urban policies by placing people and human rights at the forefront of urban sustainable development.”⁶²

Introduction

With 15 million forceful evictions every year, 22 million climate-related displacements, and 883 million people living in slums, 1.6 billion people currently live in inadequate housing conditions globally.⁶³ In 2020, the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) adopted the first resolution on homelessness as it recognized that homelessness has become a global problem now affecting people of all ages in various regions of the world.⁶⁴ CSocD described homelessness as a global problem that violates the dignity of the human person.⁶⁵ For example, some forced evictions are not considered as human rights issues from the onset due to varying national housing laws, but can be a negative effect of urban development, armed conflict, and higher cost of living.⁶⁶ In rural areas, forced evictions have been attributed to building projects such as construction of reservoirs, dams, and other public infrastructure.⁶⁷ In urban areas, rapid urban city growth, including in mega cities, lack of government support in preserving the rights of tenants, and the rising cost of living are major contributors to forced evictions and homelessness.⁶⁸ Some of the causes of homelessness include both social and economic factors, and as such are addressed by CSocD.⁶⁹ Social problems that lead to homelessness include drug and alcohol use disorders, domestic violence, and in urban areas, economic issues such as increasing cost of rent, and lack of adequate income to afford decent accommodation.⁷⁰

The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) defines homelessness as any living condition that involves sleeping without shelter and living in inadequate or insufficient shelter such as tents.⁷¹ Inadequate housing is described as a lack of security of tenure, which is when occupants are not guaranteed protection from forced evictions and other threats.⁷² Over 150 million people are estimated to be homeless globally, with about 883 million living in slums.⁷³ One of the identified causes of the global housing crisis is that affordable housing costs an average of 30% more than the average household’s income.⁷⁴ The cost of housing has also increased three times faster than the income of an average household within Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries over that past 20 years.⁷⁵

The distinction between homelessness and inadequate housing is that homelessness is considered the lack of minimal acceptable housing, while inadequate housing is the presence of such inadequacy with the lack of basic amenities and appropriate shelter.⁷⁶ For better inclusivity, UN-Habitat advocates that the definitions of homelessness should address the risk of inequality, discrimination of any kind, forced evictions, and that these definitions should include a human rights perspective.⁷⁷

⁶² UN-HABITAT, *Housing*, 2022.

⁶³ UN-HABITAT, *Homelessness & the SDGs*, 2019.

⁶⁴ UN DESA, First-ever United Nations Resolution on Homelessness, *UN DESA Voice*, 2020.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No.25, Forced Evictions and Human Rights*, 2009.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ UN DESA, First-ever United Nations Resolution on Homelessness, *UN DESA Voice*, 2020.

⁷⁰ UN-HABITAT, *Homelessness & the SDGs*, 2019.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness Chair’s Summary*, 2020.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ UN-HABITAT, *Homelessness & the SDGs*, 2019.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

International and Regional Framework

In 1948, the international community recognized “the right to adequate housing” as a human right, and added certain protections for these rights in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948).⁷⁸ The right to protection from forced evictions, the right to freedom from interference with one’s home and family, and the right to choose one’s residence, its location, and the right to move freely, are all included in the right to adequate housing.⁷⁹ In addition to these rights, people are entitled to non-discriminatory access to adequate housing and participation in housing-related decision-making at national and local levels.⁸⁰ Housing is also considered inadequate if one is isolated from employment opportunities, health care services, schools, and other social infrastructure due to location.⁸¹

The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966) acknowledges the rights of persons to adequate housing and standard of living.⁸² Article 11 of the covenant goes beyond recognizing the rights of persons to an adequate standard of living by committing States parties to continually improve the standards of living globally.⁸³ The *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) also enshrines the right to adequate housing for all persons, and fair access to such.⁸⁴ The United Nations (UN) General Assembly dedicated the year 1987 to commemorate the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.⁸⁵ This led to the establishment of the Global Strategy by the UN General Assembly for Settlement and Shelter which increased attention on the global housing crisis, and included a human rights perspective at the UN to address this problem.⁸⁶ The Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter focuses on improving the living conditions of refugees, while providing them with security and access to economic and social opportunities to improve their livelihoods.⁸⁷ The inclusion of a human rights perspective into addressing the housing crisis has led to the recognition of housing as a basic necessity for everyone, and is now being adopted by national governments and other institutions.⁸⁸

The World Summit for Social Development of 1995 proceeded as the highest level summit of that time where world leaders met to focus on the root causes of social problems and challenges, which lead to the adoption of the *Copenhagen Declaration*.⁸⁹ The *Copenhagen Declaration* was built on three main objectives which seek to promote social development through eradicating poverty, promoting adequate employment, and enhancing inclusivity at different levels of social development.⁹⁰ In 2020, CSocD commemorated the 25th anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development, during which the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs reemphasized the need to place people at the core of social development through participation by all members of the international community, as socioeconomic problems and challenges transcend national and regional borders.⁹¹

The *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (1979) stands as the most widely ratified UN human rights framework.⁹² The convention was created on the premise that although the concept of non-discrimination was enshrined in Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations*

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² UN DESA, *Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness Chair’s Summary*, 2020.

⁸³ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

⁸⁴ UN General Assembly, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*, 1966.

⁸⁵ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*; UN General Assembly, *International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (A/RES/37/221)*, 1982.

⁸⁶ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*.

⁸⁷ UNHCR, *Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter*, 2014.

⁸⁸ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*.

⁸⁹ UN DESA, *Celebrating 25 Years of Championing Social Inclusion*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, 1995.

⁹⁰ UN DESA, *Celebrating 25 Years of Championing Social Inclusion*, 2020.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*.

(1945), it was necessary to build a binding framework against discrimination on a more specific level.⁹³ This convention explicitly calls for the provision of equality in the implementation of economic, social, and cultural rights, including the right to housing.⁹⁴ The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* of 1979 requires Member States to ensure that there is no discrimination against women in the right to adequate housing, sanitation, electricity, and clean water, including in rural areas.⁹⁵ It goes further to commit Member States to ensure that the protections enshrined in these rights are also afforded to children, migrant workers, refugees, and indigenous peoples who often face discrimination due to their immigration, financial, and educational status.⁹⁶

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015) with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that include several targets to specifically highlight and tackle the global housing crisis.⁹⁷ Targets 1.4 and 1.5 of SDG 1 (no poverty) seek to ensure that all men and women, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, have equal rights and access to socioeconomic resources including housing, and have resilient accommodation to withstand climate and natural disasters.⁹⁸ Adequate housing includes the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, which are also included in target 6.3 of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), a resource that is often scarce for populations that live in inadequate housing.⁹⁹ SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) seeks to reduce inequalities, and also encompasses the inequalities faced by homeless people, those living in inadequate housing, and address the global housing crisis by recommending financial investment and enactment of policies to mitigate this problem.¹⁰⁰ By 2021, East and Southeast Asia had the highest implementation rate for SDG 1 targets, while SDG 6 had an average implementation level globally.¹⁰¹ SDG 10 had the highest achievements in Northern Africa and Asia.¹⁰²

Role of the International System

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) facilitates the work of national governments, intergovernmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders in implementing international law and guidelines regarding housing in their respective jurisdictions.¹⁰³ OHCHR strives towards this goal by including certain guidelines in policy recommendations which include ensuring affordability of housing without threat to other basic amenities such as healthcare, food, and education.¹⁰⁴ OHCHR also works to ensure that housing policies and laws allow for adequate space and infrastructure for heating, ventilation, and protection from disease vectors such as mosquitoes.¹⁰⁵ As urbanization continues to expand globally, and industrial waste increases, OHCHR maintains that housing must be located in safe environments free from pollution, toxic chemicals, and situated at a safe distance from exposure to industrial waste.¹⁰⁶ Another tenet of OHCHR's mandate in housing is that housing should be culturally adequate with respect to the cultural identity and livelihoods of tenants and homeowners.¹⁰⁷

⁹³ McDougall, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*.

⁹⁴ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No. 21, The Human Right to Adequate Housing*.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁹⁸ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 1: Targets and Indicators*, 2015.

⁹⁹ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 6: Targets and Indicators*, 2015.

¹⁰⁰ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 10: Targets and Indicators*, 2015.

¹⁰¹ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goals Progress Chart 2021*, 2021.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing*, 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ OHCHR, *OHCHR and the Right to Adequate Housing*.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

“Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness” was adopted as the priority theme for the 58th session of CSocD which was held in 2020.¹⁰⁸ A high-level discussion on this theme yielded more results regarding the definition of homelessness, and reemphasized that inclusivity was necessary to ensure that all victims of the global housing crisis such drug use disorder patients, women, and indigenous groups, are considered during decision-making at every level.¹⁰⁹ The Chairperson of the Commission also reiterated that homelessness and inadequate housing is a global problem, and affects people from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.¹¹⁰ During this session, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, presented a report to CSocD regarding “Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness.”¹¹¹ This report highlighted homelessness as one of the worst effects of poverty, social inequalities, and unaffordable housing.¹¹² Despite lack of sufficient data for current statistics, it estimates that 440 million affordable houses will be needed globally by 2025.¹¹³

One of the main causes of homelessness is the inability of people to afford housing.¹¹⁴ UN-HABITAT analyzed the global trends of homelessness and concluded that over the past 20 years, adequate housing has become less affordable for a majority of the world’s population.¹¹⁵ For example, in 2016, 40% of low-income households spent more than 40% of their total income on housing.¹¹⁶ In developing countries, more than 800 million people live in inadequate housing such as slums, and informal settlements with increased health risks due to conditions like overcrowding, lack of clean water, and the constant threat of forced evictions.¹¹⁷ Climate change is also a contributing factor to homelessness.¹¹⁸ The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, highlighted that in 2018, over 70 million people lost their accommodations worldwide due to climate disasters and conflicts.¹¹⁹ In the last decade, natural disasters such as hurricanes, including slow-onset disasters such as drought have forcefully displaced an average of 24 million people per year.¹²⁰

UN-HABITAT estimates that 96,000 new affordable and accessible housing units will be needed every day to meet the rising demands, and to address the global housing crisis.¹²¹ UN-HABITAT also advises national governments, and other relevant stakeholders to integrate housing policies into urban and national planning.¹²² Through its work, UN-HABITAT has prevented forced evictions in over 30 Member States, and assisted in enacting and implementing better housing policies across 43 Member States.¹²³ UN-HABITAT also works in partnership with OHCHR to facilitate the UN Housing Rights Program which provides technical assistance to national governments, civil society, and National Human Rights Institutions in addressing the global housing crisis.¹²⁴ CSocD also works to ensure affordability of

¹⁰⁸ UN DESA, *58th Session of the Commission for Social Development*, 2020.

¹⁰⁹ UN DESA, *Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness Chair’s Summary*, 2020.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ UN-HABITAT, *Housing*, 2022.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

adequate housing through policy recommendations.¹²⁵ Since the cost of adequate housing globally exceeds the average annual household income, policies that ensure affordability and limit the cost of rent are being enacted.¹²⁶ Measures such as rent control are being utilized in some major cities to ensure that, despite the rising cost of living and inflation, people, including marginalized groups, and other protected classes of persons can still afford adequate housing with an average income.¹²⁷ Landlords are also being incentivized to not consider forced evictions through government initiatives such as tax reliefs, tax exemptions, grants, and subsidized mortgages.¹²⁸

Maintaining a Human Rights Perspective in Addressing the Global Housing Crisis

Since arbitrary housing protection laws have allowed the problem of forced evictions to increase in recent years, new laws that are more specific about protecting tenants, quality of housing, and affordability are needed by Member States to preserve the human rights of tenants to adequate housing.¹²⁹ These rights are also enshrined in the New Urban Agenda (2016) which also acknowledges the rights of refugees, internally displaced people, and migrants, to adequate housing.¹³⁰ CSocD also advocates that laws preventing stigmatization and ostracization of homeless people also need to be instituted, and implemented.¹³¹ Judicial systems and housing institutions also require frameworks that are accessible to tenants when these rights are violated.¹³² In cases where tenants are unable to afford rent, whether monthly or annually, local laws with provisions that protect the sheltering of tenants until financial issues are resolved through partnership with civil society also reduce the chances of forced evictions.¹³³ Civil society engagement with governments and landlords can serve as a mediator between landlords and tenants when rent is late, as they can provide financial assistance, or guarantees that will protect the residency of tenants to prevent forced evictions.¹³⁴ Civil society engagement with the governments to address the housing crisis also ensures that the most vulnerable people are reached, and have equal access to adequate housing.¹³⁵ At the grassroot level, non-governmental organizations that organize support for tenants, especially members of marginalized groups, are effective at preventing forced evictions through pro-bono or affordable legal representation, consultation, and advisory services to tenants about their rights.¹³⁶

In 2020, the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Surya Subedi, issued a statement to Member States regarding the human rights violations that result from the lack of effective action by national governments, in which he announced a set of guidelines to equip Member States in creating and enacting policies that will better address the global housing crisis.¹³⁷ The 2019 *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing* consists of thematic and country visit reports that illustrate the impacts of the housing crisis across different parts of the world.¹³⁸ These guidelines also recommend best practices to Member States in policy making, including itemizing critical infrastructure that will help alleviate the housing crisis in respective Member States.¹³⁹ These guidelines seek to include a human right

¹²⁵ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 10.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 11.

¹²⁹ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 9.

¹³⁰ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256*)*, 2016.

¹³¹ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 9.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256*)*, 2016.

¹³⁶ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 9.

¹³⁷ OHCHR, *Global Housing Crisis Results in Mass Human Rights Violations – UN Expert*, 2020.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

perspective in national judiciaries, and to preserve the security of tenure which is the right of a tenant to continue to live in a rented property until the landlord obtains a court order for termination of a rental agreement, thereby preventing forced evictions.¹⁴⁰ They also focus on ending the criminalization of homeless persons, emphasize protections against discrimination based on family status, whether or not one has a criminal record, or is suffering from alcohol or drug use disorders.¹⁴¹ While catering to mitigative policies, the guidelines also seek to prohibit forced evictions which is one of the causes of homelessness.¹⁴² Provision of remediation services for homeless people are multifaceted, and include four main services which are: permanent supported housing, emergency accommodation services, accommodation-based transitional services, and integrated housing and services.¹⁴³ These services involve provision of meals, shelter, and referrals to health services when necessary.¹⁴⁴

In 2021, the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, Balakrishnan Rajagopal, submitted a report on housing discrimination and spatial segregation, which is separation of various groups in housing due to economic class, race, or other social status to the UN General Assembly.¹⁴⁵ This report highlights discrimination as one of the challenges to fair access to adequate housing.¹⁴⁶ Discrimination in access to housing includes discrimination based on unfair credit and mortgage policies, access to water and sanitation, public utilities, and road access.¹⁴⁷ To combat discrimination in access to adequate housing, this report recommends, among others, that Member States create and enact anti-discrimination policies that encompass all protected groups, including women, children, and persons with disabilities.¹⁴⁸ It also encourages the review of existing housing laws to eliminate and ensure absence of discrimination against any persons.¹⁴⁹ The report calls for anti-discrimination legislation to further enhance the initiatives by respective national, state, and local governments that provide adequate housing to those in need.¹⁵⁰ Addressing the global housing crisis requires a holistic approach to be more inclusive and led by national governments.¹⁵¹ To be effective, this approach will require a human rights perspective where Member States institute and implement policies that prohibit and prevent forced evictions due to late rent and other causes.¹⁵²

Inclusive and Sustainable Housing in Urban Areas

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, more people have been forced into homelessness across the world, with increased populations in slums and inadequate housing due to loss of jobs and income.¹⁵³ By March 2021, 156 Member States and territories had created national urban policies to combat the global housing crisis.¹⁵⁴ CSocD partners with Member States to implement policies that seek to provide resilient housing infrastructure in high-risk areas that are susceptible to natural disasters.¹⁵⁵ These efforts aim to mitigate the effects of natural disasters due to climate change and to reduce the risk of forced

¹⁴⁰ Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing*, 2019.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ OHCHR, *Spatial Segregation and the Right to Adequate Housing (A/HRC/49/48) Report to the 76th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing Balakrishnan Rajagopal*, 2021.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 9.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 11: Progress and Info*, 2021.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

homelessness.¹⁵⁶ The Commission also works in partnership with the UN Environment Programme on the Sustainable Buildings and Construction Programme which focuses on sustainable production and consumption methods of building that will provide more resilient infrastructure to withstand the present challenges of climate change that lead to homelessness and loss of housing.¹⁵⁷

In 2016, the New Urban Agenda was adopted during the third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development as an initiative for better urban planning.¹⁵⁸ It incorporates guidelines for urbanization to maintain inclusivity, social development, and equality in line with SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) which seeks to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.”¹⁵⁹ The New Urban Agenda was also endorsed by the UN General Assembly as a tool for better urban planning to deal with existing and emerging challenges of urbanization and population growth across the world.¹⁶⁰ Member States acknowledge that implementation of existing frameworks such as the SDGs is still far from optimal, and requires new strategies worldwide.¹⁶¹ Some of these strategies include sustainable city planning and development to ensure affordability of housing, prevent homelessness, and promote accessibility to marginalized groups, including women and children, to adequate and affordable housing.¹⁶² Member States also agreed to continuously work towards full implementation of the right to adequate housing, and sustainable infrastructure for transportation, social services, and livelihoods.¹⁶³

The World Economic Forum suggests five policies to address the global housing crisis including “upzoning,” which allows for construction of several units of housing per lot, better immigration policies, which would allow for more immigrant workers in the housing industry, and reduce building costs.¹⁶⁴ Financial incentives for both demand and supply sides of housing such as tax breaks for developers, and low-interest loans for families will reduce overall costs of housing, while renovating dilapidated, and abandoned structures, converting them into livable units.¹⁶⁵ The World Economic Forum also encourages development of commercial retail real estate to provide tax revenue that can be used to fund residential infrastructure projects, and reviewing mortgage policies for more equitable access, and affordability to home buyers.¹⁶⁶

Conclusion

The human population is expected to double by 2050, which will lead to an increase in urbanization, and the demand for adequate and sustainable housing.¹⁶⁷ While urbanization presents more opportunities for social development, there is also a need for inclusivity, accessibility, and affordability of housing.¹⁶⁸ The criminalization of homelessness has added to the global housing crisis, and disproportionately affects women, children, indigenous populations, and other marginalized groups.¹⁶⁹ Other factors such as climate change, low income, and high cost of housing have also contributed to homelessness and lack of adequate housing.¹⁷⁰ The need to maintain a human rights perspective in addressing the housing crisis, and new national housing policies are some of the strategies through which the international community

¹⁵⁶ UN DESA, *Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements*.

¹⁵⁷ UN-HABITAT, *Housing*, 2022.

¹⁵⁸ The United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, *New Urban Agenda*, 2016.

¹⁵⁹ UN DESA, *Sustainable Development Goal 11: Overview*, 2015.

¹⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256*)*, 2016.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ World Economic Forum, *Here are Five Policies to Help Solve the Global Housing Crisis*, 2022.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256*)*, 2016.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ OHCHR, *Discrimination in the Context of Housing (A/76/408) Report to the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly by the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Balakrishnan Rajagopal*, 2021.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

is working towards providing more accessible, affordable, and resilient housing to people of all groups, without discrimination of any sort.¹⁷¹

Further Research

While researching this topic, delegates should consider the following: With new challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, how can a global health perspective be better incorporated into housing laws and policies? In regions where there is a higher level of discrimination in housing, how can national governments be better engaged to enact more inclusive laws and national housing policies to address this problem? What programs are needed to help people out of homelessness? In what ways can housing become more affordable?

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The Special Rapporteur compiled this report based on findings from global challenges that lead to homelessness and other related problems. It stresses that national governments have not done enough to mitigate the global housing crisis on their own. To this end, the report itemizes guidelines that can be adopted by Member States and regional governments to enforce quality standards in housing laws and policies, and in the infrastructure needed for housing to be considered adequate.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. (2019). *Homelessness & the SDGs*. Retrieved 11 February 2022 from: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/07/SALCEDO_Jesus_Presentation_2-1.pdf

This document analyzes the global housing crisis in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. It includes statistics that prove that it is indeed a global crisis and cuts across different levels of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Delegates will find this useful when defining the various terms associated with the global housing crisis as it includes inclusive definitions that encompass often marginalized groups in decision making in matters of housing.

United Nations, General Assembly, Twenty-first session. (1966). *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200) (XXI)*. Adopted on the Report of the Third Committee (A/6546). Retrieved 11 February 2022 from: [http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2200\(XXI\)](http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/2200(XXI))

This document highlights the different rights of persons in economic, social, and cultural environments. It will be useful to delegates who wish to research the rights of the human person regarding their social environment. These rights include the right to adequate housing and recommends internationally acceptable standards in housing infrastructure, laws, and national housing policies.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. Retrieved 14 February 2021 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/70/1>

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes several goals that relate directly with housing and quality of life. These goals also have specific targets that are recommended for mitigating the global housing crisis. Delegates will find this useful as a foundational document for new best practices and policies needed for solving the challenges that lead to homelessness and lack of adequate housing.

United Nations World Summit for Social Development. (1995). *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*. Retrieved 14 February 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/CONF.166/9>

¹⁷¹ CSocD, *Affordable Housing and Social Protections Systems for all to Address Homelessness (E/CN.5/2020/3)*, 2015, p. 10.

The Commission for Social Development works to enhance the standards of living of all persons under the auspices of economic, social, and cultural empowerment. This declaration was adopted in 1995 to serve as a framework for the actualization of social development standards across the world. It includes the rights to health and housing, and equal access to legal protection of people's homes, while affording them the comfort of adequate housing.

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2. Leveraging Sport for Social Development

“Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there only was despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.”¹⁷²

Introduction

Sport has long been known as a universal language due to the manner in which it fosters teamwork and collaboration among individuals from different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.¹⁷³ Sport refers to all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction.¹⁷⁴ In modern academic discourse, social development through sport typically refers to the manner in which sport serves as a tool for integrating diverse communities, driving social change, and fostering peace and understanding.¹⁷⁵ The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) defines inclusive social development as that which concerns poverty eradication, inequality reduction, employment opportunities, and the role of civil society, family, disability, and minority or indigenous status.¹⁷⁶ The UN Research Institute for Social Development (UN RISD) expands this definition to include further goals of social development such as improvements in human well-being, social relations, and social institutions.¹⁷⁷ UN RISD highlights the importance of all efforts towards social development being equitable, sustainable, and compatible with principles of democratic government and social justice.¹⁷⁸

In line with the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), the United Nations (UN) Commission for Social Development (CSocD) is committed to ensuring that progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promotes equitable social development.¹⁷⁹ Among the noted linkages of sport to the SDGs are: SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions).¹⁸⁰ The role of sport in progress towards the achievement of the SDGs can inform action by Member States, UN entities, sports organizations, federations and associations, non-governmental organizations, athletes, the media, civil society, academia, and the private sector.¹⁸¹ This can come in the form of advocating for change within sports institutions, establishing programs that get young people or marginalized groups involved in sports, incentivizing athletic programs in other domestic or international institutions, promoting awareness campaigns through sport pertaining to public health or the environment, and more.¹⁸² From grassroots activities to large-scale sporting events, the United Nations Office on Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP) recognizes the role of all levels of sport towards peace initiatives and unity.¹⁸³ Given the universality of sport, it is well positioned to bring people together and can be utilized to create change in a variety of ways including encouraging unity, fostering socio-economic progress, bridging social barriers, and promoting ideals of non-violence.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷² Nelson Mandela Foundation, *Speech by Nelson Mandela at the Inaugural Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award, Monaco 2000*, 2000.

¹⁷³ UN DGC, *Universal Language of Sport Brings People Together, Teaches Teamwork, Tolerance*, Secretary-General Says at Launch of International Year, *UN Meetings Coverage and Press Release*, 2004.

¹⁷⁴ Hassan, *Leveraging Sport for Social Change*, *Sportanddev.org*, 2021.

¹⁷⁵ IOC, *Peace and Development Through Sport*, 2021.

¹⁷⁶ UN DESA, *Division for Inclusive Social Development*.

¹⁷⁷ UN RISD, *Social Development in an Uncertain World UNRISD Research Agenda 2010-2014*, 2011.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ UN DESA, *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD60*, 2022.

¹⁸⁰ UNESCO, *Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport Final Report (SHS/2017/5 REV)*, 2017.

¹⁸¹ UN OSDP, *Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals*.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ Lemke, *The Role of Sport in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*, *UN Chronicle*, 2016.

¹⁸⁴ UN OSDP, *Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals*.

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted by the General Assembly in 1948, communicates the fundamental and inalienable rights of all human beings which contribute to a free, just, and peaceful global environment.¹⁸⁵ It highlights the importance of placing individuals at the center of development as opposed to focusing on broader societal changes alone to indicate global social progress.¹⁸⁶ In 1969, the General Assembly reinforced its commitment to the ideals of the UDHR, and placed human life and prosperity at the center of the social development agenda through the *Declaration of Social Policy and Development*.¹⁸⁷ The declaration outlined the goals of the General Assembly to promote higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions which allow for and foster social progress and development.¹⁸⁸ A 2016 report from UN DESA entitled *Leaving no one Behind: the Imperative of Inclusive Development* discusses the importance of inclusivity of all persons in efforts towards social development, and explains that marginalized groups continue to face discrimination and exclusion from many aspects of society despite government protections of their rights and freedoms.¹⁸⁹

The 1995 World Summit for Social Development established the goal of making social development a national and international priority due to the manner in which it, as a discipline, affects the lives of all persons.¹⁹⁰ Among the issues discussed at the summit were the widening of the wealth gap within Member States, environmental deterioration, women's disproportionate burden of poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration, as well as alleviating all factors which inhibit health, safety, security, peace, and well-being.¹⁹¹ In one of the outcome documents from the Summit, known as the *Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development* (1995), promoting equality and social integration through sport is listed among the eight requirements for encouraging full participation of all individuals in society.¹⁹² The 2030 Agenda, established a formal link between many elements of social development in one comprehensive document and plan for action.¹⁹³

Sport is recognized by the 2030 Agenda as a key enabler of social development due to its multi-faceted role as a source for exercise, entertainment, and collaboration as well as a potential vehicle for social change and advancement.¹⁹⁴ It is often connected to the achievement of the SDGs and broader social development in the categories of health, empowerment of marginalized groups, education, and social inclusion objectives.¹⁹⁵ During the Seventy-first session of the General Assembly in 2016, delegates discussed the growing influence of sport on alleviating domestic and international strife regarding differences in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and gender.¹⁹⁶ It was determined that sport continues to be a strong uniting force among individuals and groups from a wide array of backgrounds and can contribute to the minimization of prejudices and pre-established sentiments about other persons and groups.¹⁹⁷ Many future improvements in the realm of sustainable social development are directly related to the physical and mental health and well-being of the world population which is one of the dominant results of involvement in sports of all kinds.¹⁹⁸ For instance, more of a community's time and energy can

¹⁸⁵ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*, 1948.

¹⁸⁶ UN DESA, *World Summit for Social Development 1995*.

¹⁸⁷ UN General Assembly, *Declaration on Social Progress and Development (A/RES/2542 (XXIV))*, 1969.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ UN DESA, *Leaving No One Behind: The Imperative of Inclusive Social Development*, 2016.

¹⁹⁰ UN DESA, *World Summit for Social Development 1995*.

¹⁹¹ UN World Summit for Social Development, *Report of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*, 1995.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹⁹⁴ UN DGC, *International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 6 April Securing a Sustainable and Peaceful Future for All: The Contribution of Sport*.

¹⁹⁵ Lemke, *The Role of Sport in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals*, *UN Chronicle*, 2016.

¹⁹⁶ UN DGC, *Transcending Borders, Sport Plays Critical Role in Overcoming Hurdles to Building Peace, Sustainable Development, Speakers Tell General Assembly*, *United Nations Meetings Coverage*, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ Gary & Rubin, *Sport Promoting Human Development and Well-Being: Psychological Components of Sustainability*, *UN Chronicle*, 2016.

be spent on advocating climate action, targeting inequalities, and improving educational opportunities if citizens are healthy and physically secure.¹⁹⁹

There is an increasing recognition by international organizations like the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Pan American Sports Organization (PASO) that humanitarian programs which employ sport as a tool for social change are sustainable in diverse contexts and can be leveraged to further the goals of social development.²⁰⁰ Since 1922, the IOC has partnered with the International Labor Organization (ILO) to collaborate on promoting sustainable development through sports; the IOC was granted Permanent Observer status to the General Assembly in 2009 to further facilitate this.²⁰¹ The IOC and the UN worked together in creating the 2018 *Sports for Climate Action Framework* which called on the international community to increase their environmental responsibility, reduce overall climate impact, educate the public about climate issues and initiatives, promote sustainable production and consumption, and advocate for climate action through the media and communication sources.²⁰² The 1995 *Sports for Generation Equality Framework* provides a different angle on social development through sport and outlines the ways in which women’s participation in sports can lead to reduction in gender-based violence, foster leadership skills which can be translated into all areas of life, and break down harmful gender stereotypes.²⁰³

Role of the International System

UN DESA’s Division for Inclusive Social Development (DISD) houses the substantive mandate on sport for development and peace.²⁰⁴ UN DESA facilitates NGO participation in CSocD sessions which ensures strong involvement of civil society in the work of the body.²⁰⁵ The DISD is responsible for identifying emerging issues in the international community, monitoring global socio-economic trends, and assessing the implications of such for both national and international social policy.²⁰⁶ In 2012, DISD launched the United Nations Social Development Network (UNSDN) to act as a global knowledge-sharing platform regarding best practices in global social development between Member States.²⁰⁷

CSocD engages constantly with the topic of sustainable social development, but it has not yet discussed the relationship between sport and social development as a formal topic for its committee session.²⁰⁸ In 2013, the General Assembly declared April 6th the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP), recognizing the positive role that sport plays in the advancement of human rights as well as social and economic development in the areas of community-building, alleviating poverty and hunger, disease prevention, promoting gender equality, conflict resolution, and social mobilization.²⁰⁹ It addresses the manner in which communities that are vulnerable to poverty, inequality, and conflict can utilize sports-based outreach programs to promote inclusivity, share resources and information, and establish a sense of solidarity.²¹⁰ The 2022 theme of IDSDP, “Securing a Sustainable and Peaceful Future for All: The Contribution of Sport,” was centered around the role of sport in addressing the climate crisis.²¹¹ It has also been highlighted that the sports industry can also become climate neutral and transition in exemplifying climate change mitigation on a broad scale.²¹²

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ IOC, *Cooperation with the UN*.

²⁰² UNFCCC Secretariat, *Sports for Climate Action Framework*, 2018.

²⁰³ UN-Women, *Sports for Generation Equality Framework*.

²⁰⁴ UN DESA, *Sport for Development and Peace*.

²⁰⁵ UN DESA, *60th Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD60*, 2022.

²⁰⁶ UN DESA, *What We Do*.

²⁰⁷ UN DESA, *United Nations Social Development Network (UNSDN)*.

²⁰⁸ UN DESA, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

²⁰⁹ UN DGC, *International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 6 April Securing a Sustainable and Peaceful Future for All: The Contribution of Sport*.

²¹⁰ Brewer, *Using Sport to End Hunger and Achieve Food Security*, *UN Chronicle*, 2016.

²¹¹ UN DGC, *International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 6 April Securing a Sustainable and Peaceful Future for All: The Contribution of Sport*.

²¹² Ibid.

In 2017, the sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport (MINEPS), held by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), adopted the *Kazan Action Plan* as well as a sport policy follow-up framework to “facilitate international and multi-stakeholder policy convergence, ease international cooperation and foster capacity-building efforts of governmental authorities and sport organizations.”²¹³ The plan streamlined the definition of inclusive access to sport, recognized sport as a means to promote individual health and augment the overall health of Member States, advocated integrated policy between sport and climate, and established standards by which the international community could protect the integrity of sport.²¹⁴

In 2020, the General Assembly adopted resolution 75/18 entitled “Sport as an Enabler of Sustainable Development” which outlines the importance of engaging sport within the international system and integrating sport into various development objectives such as the SDGs.²¹⁵ It also created the Inter-Agency Group on Sport for Development and Peace (IAGSDP) to facilitate ongoing collaboration of members within their respective mandates to advance the role of sport as an enabler of development.²¹⁶ The IAGSDP, in partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), produced an advocacy brief in December of 2020 entitled, “Recovering Better: Sport for Development and Peace: Reopening, Recovery, and Resilience Post-COVID-19.”²¹⁷ This brief highlights the role of the UN system in the multilateral, multistakeholder re-imagining of sport as an end and a means to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.²¹⁸ It discusses the ways in which the reopening of sporting events serves as an opportunity to encourage diversity of participants and audiences to get involved in athletics, especially women and girls.²¹⁹

At its Seventy-first session in 2017 covering the topic of “Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace,” the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to its 73rd session and provide a review of the contribution of sport to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and an updated action plan on sport for development and peace.²²⁰ In the report titled “Strengthening the Global Framework for Leveraging Sport for Development and Peace,” Secretary-General António Guterres reemphasized the importance of developing a global framework for continued efforts in the field of sport and promoting improved coherence and collaboration on the topic of sport as an enabler of social development.²²¹ He extensively referenced the *2018 Global Action Plan on Physical Activity* by the World Health Organization to communicate a common vision and goal of boosting physical activity to improve health and well-being, especially for those in vulnerable or marginalized populations.²²²

Utilizing Sports to Promote Climate Action

Sport, as an entity that affects, and is affected, by climate change, is uniquely positioned to take accountability for the significant carbon footprint it produces.²²³ It can further commit to reducing its negative environmental impacts and strive for carbon neutrality; incentivize action from outside of the sport sector; and raise awareness among its billions of participants, facilitators, and spectators about

²¹³ UNESCO, *Sixth International Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Physical Education and Sport Final Report (SHS/2017/5 REV)*, 2017.

²¹⁴ UNESCO, *Kazan Action Plan (SHS/2017/PI/H/14 REV)*, 2017.

²¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Sport as an Enabler of Sustainable Development (A/RES/75/18)*, 2020.

²¹⁶ UN DESA, *Inter-Agency Group on Sport for Development and Peace (IAGSDP)*.

²¹⁷ UN DESA, *Sport for Development and Peace*.

²¹⁸ UN DESA, *Recovering Better: Sport for Development and Peace*.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Sport as a Means to Promote Education, Health, Development and Peace (A/RES/71/160)*, 2017.

²²¹ UN General Assembly, *Strengthening the Global Framework for Leveraging Sport for Development and Peace Report of the Secretary-General (A/73/325)*, 2018.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ UN DGC, *International Day of Sport for Development and Peace 6 April Securing a Sustainable and Peaceful Future for All: The Contribution of Sport*.

climate issues.²²⁴ In addition to being an industry which affects climate change, sports around the world are subject to the many detrimental effects of climate change as well.²²⁵ Climate change is continuing to pose a threat to sport in the following ways: damage to sports infrastructures and playing surfaces due to storms, drought, and flooding; unseasonal rainfall inducing game cancellations or abandonment; increased physical strain on players from heat exhaustion, dehydration; and lack of natural snow in outdoor winter sports facilities.²²⁶ A 2021 Current Issues in Tourism study revealed that over half of the former winter Olympic host cities will likely not be able to sponsor future winter games by 2050 as a result of the lack of snow and ice conditions necessary as the climate warms.²²⁷

The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, established at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, lays out the interaction between social development and climate action, and provides a resource for the ways in which sport can serve as a facilitator of climate progress.²²⁸ Understanding that access to information about climate and its adverse effects around the world is crucial to garnering support for climate action, televised sports and sports media can act as common mediums through which to distribute information and raise awareness.²²⁹

The *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* (UNFCCC) (1992), endorses climate responsibility among Member States and provides a platform for subsequent international climate agreements.²³⁰ While the widespread environmental implications of climate change on development are largely accepted within the international community, the challenge remains to shift the conversation to place human needs, equity, and security at the core of policymaking.²³¹ Recognizing the roles of safety, security, and equality in promoting sustainable social development, as well as the adverse effects of climate change, sport can facilitate social progress and indicate existing patterns of suffering and social stagnation due to climate issues.²³²

The global sport sector, in general, is known to be a significant contributor to climate change, with annual carbon emissions roughly equaling that of a medium-sized country.²³³ This calculation accounts only for transportation to and from events, construction of venues, and the supply chains of sports equipment and machinery.²³⁴ The Beijing Winter Olympics in 2022 aimed to set a new standard for major global sporting events by striving to maintain low carbon emissions across all categories of the event.²³⁵ The Olympic Torch and over 800 vehicles were powered by hydrogen fuels, and all venues were sustained by renewable energy plants.²³⁶ In 2020, the IOC announced a commitment to “climate positivity” from 2030 onwards, meaning that the carbon savings created by the Olympic Games would exceed the potential negative impacts thereof.²³⁷ Several other sports organizations have adopted the initiative to shift towards zero carbon emissions including the Organizing Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris in 2024, the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), World Sailing, the International Biathlon Union (IBU), and Formula E.²³⁸

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ IOC & UNFCCC, *Sustainability Essentials Sports for Climate Action*.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ UN DESA, *UN DESA Policy Brief No. 128: Addressing Climate Change Through Sport*, 2022.

²²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I))*, 1992.

²²⁹ The World Bank, *Social Dimensions of Climate Change*.

²³⁰ UNCED, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992.

²³¹ UNRISD, *Social Development in an Uncertain World UNRISD Research Agenda 2010-2014*, 2011.

²³² National Aeronautics and Space Administration Jet Propulsion Laboratory Earth Science Communications Team, *The Effects of Climate Change*, 2022.

²³³ UN DESA, *UN DESA Policy Brief No. 128: Addressing Climate Change through Sport*, 2022.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ IOC, *Five Ways in which Beijing 2022 Will Become Carbon Neutral*, 2022.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ IOC, *Olympic Games to become “climate positive” from 2030*, 2020.

²³⁸ IOC, *Sport Sets Pace for Climate Action as IOC and Other Sports Organisations Join “Race to Zero” Campaign*, 2021.

Beyond large-scale sports organizations' commitments to reducing carbon emissions, individual sports teams and athletes have the capability to raise awareness for climate change initiatives through sustainability campaigns, utilizing spokespersons, and setting positive examples of sustainable behavior in everyday life.²³⁹ Earthday.org established a campaign called "Athletes for the Earth" which works with athletes, teams, stadiums, organizations, and colleges and universities to promote green initiatives and environmental stewardship.²⁴⁰ This, along with other similar campaigns, calls upon professional athletes to serve as role models for young athletes and fans in order to express the dependence of sport on a sustainable climate and to influence climate action among audiences.²⁴¹

Promoting Gender Equality in Sport

Gender equality and the importance of women's full and equal participation and leadership in all areas of sustainable development is strongly affirmed in General Assembly resolution 66/288, "The Future we Want," a primary outcome document of the 2012 United Nations *Conference on Sustainable Development* (Rio +20).²⁴² Although sport is championed as a universal language and a strong uniting force, there are many factors which act as barriers to participation in sport and sporting events, many of which pertain to gender inequality.²⁴³ Despite progress towards equal gender participation in sports over the past several decades, factors such as gender stereotyping, segregated education and play, gaps in financial incentives to sport, the lack of women and girls in sports leadership and coaching, as well as violence and harassment towards women all inhibit this progress and serve as barriers.²⁴⁴ Presently, less than 1% of voting members of the governing body for FIFA, are women.²⁴⁵ By contrast, the IOC has nearly doubled the number of women serving on their commissions since 2013, from 20% to now roughly 47%.²⁴⁶

The 2021 Women in Sports Report found that 4 in 10 women working in the sports sector have experienced workplace discrimination due to their gender identity.²⁴⁷ In line with the 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, the General Assembly is committed to ensuring that all public authorities and institutions protect against discrimination against women, including public sports organizations.²⁴⁸ Furthermore, sport has been determined to be a significant contributor to the empowerment of women, and increasing women's participation in sport provides opportunities for women's economic development.²⁴⁹ A 2008 report by Women In Sport entitled *From Barriers to Benefits The Economic Case for Female Participation in Sport*, highlights several key areas of economic development that are addressed by women's increased involvement in sports.²⁵⁰ Building off of this, the report outlines how women who have good physical health are more likely to pursue more education and ultimately earn higher wages, leading to greater economic freedom.²⁵¹

Media coverage plays a substantial role in driving viewership, engagement, and participation in sports and sporting events.²⁵² It is more difficult for viewers to engage with female sports because, outside of the Olympic games, coverage of women's sports accounts for only 4% of all global sports media coverage,

²³⁹ UN DESA, *UN DESA Policy Brief No. 128: Addressing Climate Change Through Sport*, 2022.

²⁴⁰ Earthday.org, *Athletes for the Earth Sports are Feeling the Heat from Climate Change*.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² UN General Assembly, *The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288)*, 2012.

²⁴³ UN General Assembly, *Sport as an Enabler of Sustainable Development (A/RES/75/18)*, 2020.

²⁴⁴ UN DAW and DESA, *Women 2000 and Beyond: Women, Gender Equality and Sport*, 2007.

²⁴⁵ Bobenrieth, *Play It Forward: The Untapped Potential of Sport to Accelerate Global Progress towards Gender Equity*, *UN Chronicle*, 2016.

²⁴⁶ IOC, *Female membership of IOC Commissions reaches an all-time high of 47.7 per cent – two new female chairs*, 2020.

²⁴⁷ YouGov, *Women in Sport Report 2021*, 2021.

²⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*, 1979.

²⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *Sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace (A/RES/71/160)*, 2017.

²⁵⁰ Women In Sport, *Research Report: From Barriers to Benefits The Economic Case for Female Participation in Sport*, 2008.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² YouGov, *Women in Sport Report 2021*, 2021.

and within that coverage, objectification of women is very widespread.²⁵³ Much of the media coverage that does take place regarding female athletes is centered around appearance, family life, age, or clothing, whereas men's coverage is typically more related to their athletic capability, skill, and contribution to the sport overall.²⁵⁴ In 2021, the IOC released specific portrayal guidelines which call for the implementation of gender-equal portrayal of athletes and sporting events across all media, and forms of communication overseen by the Olympic Games.²⁵⁵

Leading up to the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the IOC partnered with UN-Women to launch a program called "One Win Leads to Another," designed to empower women and girls through sport.²⁵⁶ The program allowed for adolescent girls living in socially vulnerable environments to visit a participating Olympic Villa and practice physical sport as well as attend workshops focusing on sport as a means to reduce inequalities and build confidence among young women.²⁵⁷ The program was later joined by the brand Always, with the specific initiative of using sport as a way to stop the decrease in confidence girls experience during puberty.²⁵⁸ The conversation about gender equality in sport has historically been a binary one, given that male and female categories are regulated and enforced heavily at many levels.²⁵⁹ However, it is becoming increasingly common for sports teams and organizations to foster involvement in sports for individuals of all gender identities to ensure the pillars of social development, including diversity and inclusion, are being upheld.²⁶⁰ In 2020, the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) published a report entitled *Intersection of Race and Gender Discrimination in Sport (A/HRC/44/26)* which calls on Member States and sporting bodies to ensure specific protections for intersex, transgender, and gender non-conforming individuals in the realm of sport, as these protections fall under the guidelines set by SDG 5.²⁶¹

Conclusion

Sports can bring people together from all walks of life, origins, backgrounds, beliefs, and social status in order to foster collaboration and contribute to the achievement of sustainable social development around the world in a wide variety of ways.²⁶² It can serve as an indicator of adverse climate effects and also as a means to promote climate action.²⁶³ Additionally, sport can be used to bridge inequalities relating to gender and empower all individuals to fulfill their potential regardless of gender identity.²⁶⁴ Over 75 years after its creation by the World Summit for Social Development, CSocD has a unique capability to tackle the issue of leveraging sport for sustainable development due to its effects on social development.²⁶⁵

Further Research

As delegates explore this topic, the following questions should be considered: How can local sports organizations garner more participation from different persons and groups? What initiatives can be undertaken by national and international sports industries to raise awareness for social issues? In what ways can sport best include and respect individuals who do not conform to the gender binary? How can sport be leveraged to help individuals learn skills to help them succeed in the athletics, relationships, the workforce, etc.? How can large scale sporting events be encouraged or incentivized to reduce carbon

²⁵³ UNESCO, *Gender Equality in Sports Media*, 2021.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ IOC, *Portrayal Guidelines Gender-Equal, Fair and Inclusive Representation in Sport*, 2021.

²⁵⁶ UN-Women, *Press Release: In sport and for gender equality One Win Leads to Another*, 2016.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Leap Sports, *Non-Binary Inclusion in Sport*, 2020.

²⁶⁰ UN Women, *UN Women hosts first high-level event on gender diversity and non-binary identities at UN headquarters*, 2019.

²⁶¹ UN HRC, *Intersection of race and gender discrimination in sport (A/HRC/44/26)*, 2020.

²⁶² UN DGC, *Universal Language of Sport Brings People Together, Teaches Teamwork, Tolerance, Secretary-General Says at Launch of International Year*, *UN Meetings Coverage and Press Release*, 2004.

²⁶³ UN DESA, *UN DESA Policy Brief No. 128: Addressing Climate Change through Sport*, 2022.

²⁶⁴ Women In Sport, *Research Report: From Barriers to Benefits The Economic Case for Female Participation in Sport*, 2008.

²⁶⁵ UN DESA, *Commission for Social Development (CSocD)*.

emissions or maintain certain emission standards? How can issues like prejudice, racism, xenophobia, and sexism be better addressed through sport?

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United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (n.d.) *World Summit for Social Development 1995*. Retrieved 14 March 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-summit-for-social-development-1995.html>

The World Summit for Social Development provides a platform for understanding social development and its role in the UN system. It provides a definition for social development and establishes the importance of focusing on the individual in fostering progress in a sustainable way. It also provides a framework by which subsequent UN bodies have discussed the topic and outlines the importance of full and equal participation from Member States in facilitating social development. Delegates can use this source to maintain a consistent interpretation of sustainable social development and its disciplines to incorporate into their positions.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2017). *Kazan Action Plan (SHS/2017/PI/H/14 REV)*. Retrieved 16 March 2022 from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000252725>

The Kazan Action Plan marks the commitment of sport to the broader cause of promoting sustainable social development and identifies major priority areas for cooperation among stakeholders on both the national and international levels. It captures much of the recent academic expertise relating to sport and the role of physical activity as well as larger-scale sports policy on the individual and society. It is one of the most comprehensive sport-related UN documents to date and can help delegates understand sport in the wider context of social development.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Sports for Generation Equality Framework*. (n.d.) Retrieved 8 February 2022 from: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/News%20and%20events/Stories/2020/Sport-GenerationEquality.pdf>

The framework, inspired by the Sports for Climate Action framework, is an easy-to-understand guideline for advancing gender equality and the benefits of such for the international community. It explains how increasing sports involvement among women and girls can reduce gender-based violence, close the investment gap between gendered sports, and promote women's equal participation in all aspects of social and political life. Delegates can use this document to inform their delegation's efforts to promote sustainable development through getting more women and girls involved in sport at all levels.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat. (2018). *Sports for Climate Action Framework*. Retrieved 8 February 2022 from: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/09/Sports for Climate Action Declaration and Framework.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/09/Sports%20for%20Climate%20Action%20Declaration%20and%20Framework.pdf)

This framework outlines the major areas in which sport intersects with advocacy for, and raising awareness about, climate change. It designs a plan to use sport to contribute to the achievement of the net zero carbon emission global economy by 2050 that was established by the Paris Agreement. It further offers general strategies for sports organizations to participate and interact with one another in any social development initiative. As climate change directly affects social development, this source will be a very helpful foundation for delegates.

United Nations, General Assembly. (1992). *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* (A/CONF.151/26 (Vol. I))*. Retrieved 16 March 2022 from: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_CONF.151_26_Vol.I_Declaration.pdf

The Rio Declaration outlines the increasing importance of climate action in economic, political, and social realms. It highlights the necessity of placing environment at the center of concerns for sustainable development and using the international framework for climate action to facilitate national initiatives to promote sustainability. It describes the way climate change action can intersect with more general social action regarding poverty eradication, social inclusion, and similar initiatives. Sport, as both a contributor to climate change and an area highly affected by its adverse effects, is well-positioned to incorporate climate change awareness into related policy. Delegates can use this document to shape their positions on leveraging sport for climate progress to facilitate social development.

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