STUDY GUIDE
ECOSOC

It's time to be UNique!

Prague, February 2020
Prague Model United Nations Conference

Contents

Welcome Letter

Dear Delegate,

First and foremost, PragueMUN 2020's UN Economic and Social Council would like to welcome our distinguished delegates coming from different parts of the world. The chairs, Fatema and Jelle, are honoured to meet all of you for a wonderful few days of debate and good times. PragueMUN is filled with experiences, debates, friendly conflicts, and lifetime friendships. Being prepared requires a lot of research and construction; but most importantly, it requires passion and will to learn.

This conference mimics the United Nation's conferences, where delegates present themselves and their assigned countries in a way to promote world peace and unity. A delegate must present their argument in a professional manner, whilst obtaining diplomatic relations. The topics we are going to be addressing is one that requires in depth understanding of not only your country's policies, but also the countries' you will be debating with. This study guide will provide you with the key information that should serve your guiding points, however your analysis of the issue should not stop here.

Should you have any doubts or questions of this study guide, the committee mechanics, or the conference itself, feel free to contact us and we will get back to you as soon as we can. Should all be clear we cannot wait to meet you all in Prague.

Kind regards,

Fatema Amodi and Jelle van der Ham

Chairs of ECOSOC

Introduction to the European Council

ECOSOC stands for United Nations Economic and Social Council and is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It is the central forum for discussing internal issues relating to economic or social matters. The council meets in principle once a year, for a four-week session in July. In addition to this, there has been an annual meeting in April since 1998 with key committees of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) present.

The committee consists of 54 UN Member states that change yearly on a rotating basis; nations are on the council for three years, and thus every year a third of the members in the committee changes. The 54 members are divided as follows: 14 African states, 11 Asian states, 6 Eastern European states, 10 Latin American & Caribbean states, and 13 Western European & Other states.

In addition to these Member States, there are several NGO's and other inter-government or autonomous organisations who have an observer status. These include, for example, but are not limited to: World Tourism Organization, Global Water Partnership, Helsinki Commission, Organisation of Ibero-American states, organization of the petroleum exporting countries, and the International Center for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries.

Several issues and challenges have been delegated to a number of specialised committees, which are part of the ECOSOC but function separately, handling their respective topics. These committees are at present:

- UN Commission for Social Development
- Commission on Narcotic Drugs
- Commission of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Commission on Science and Technology for Development
- UN Commission on the Status of Women
- Commission on Population and Development
- UN Statistical Commission
- UN Forum on Forests

Topic A: Eliminating Discrimination in the Workplace

Topic Explanation

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are part of the foundations of the rule of law. As Member States noted in the Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law, "all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to just, fair and equitable laws and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law". They also dedicated themselves to respect the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

The international human rights legal framework contains international instruments to combat specific forms of discrimination, including discrimination against indigenous peoples, migrants, minorities, people with disabilities, discrimination against women, racial and religious discrimination, or discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In the Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law, Member States also recognized the importance of ensuring that women, on the basis of the equality of men and women, fully enjoy the benefits of the rule of law. Member States committed to using law to uphold their equal rights and ensure their full and equal participation, including in institutions of governance and the judicial system, and recommitted to establishing appropriate legal and legislative frameworks to prevent and address all forms of discrimination and violence against women and to secure their empowerment and full access to justice.
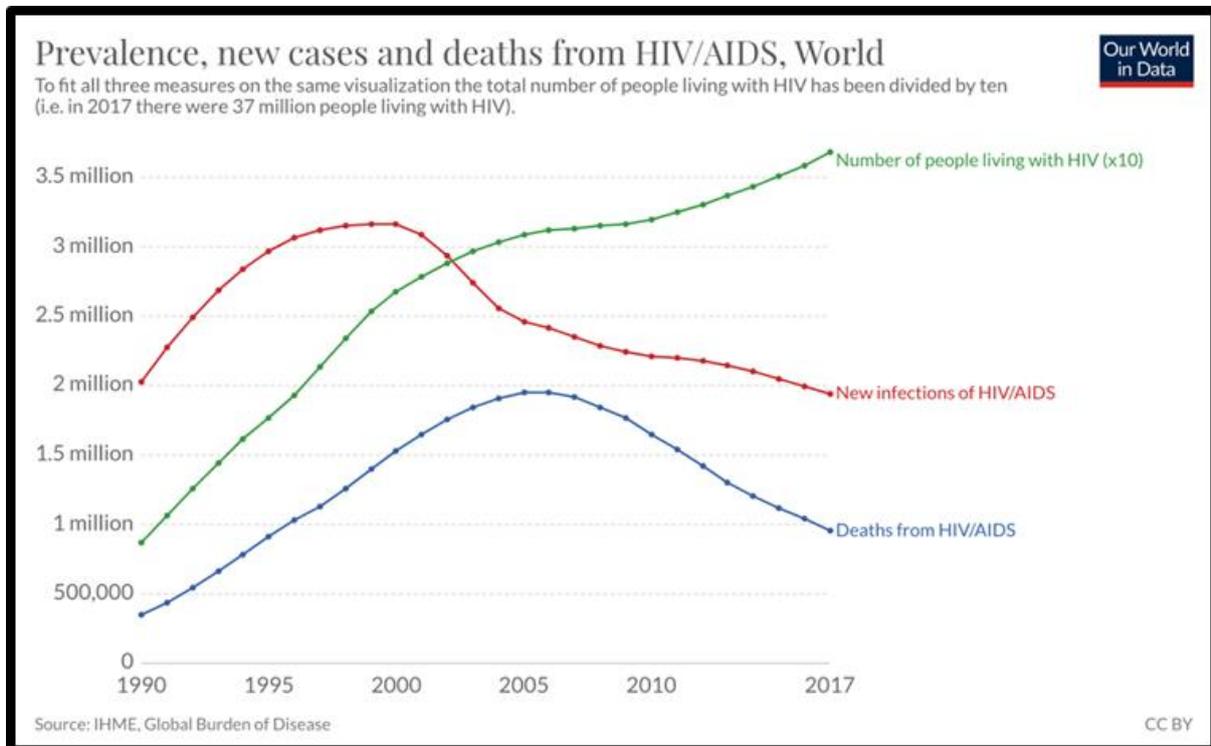
Common Workplace Discrimination

Although progress has been made at combating discrimination in the workplace, rising gender disparities in income and other forms of discrimination – including age, sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS status – are cause for growing concern, the United Nations Labour Organization (ILO) said in a report that has recently been released.

According to the UN, the global picture of the struggle to overcome discrimination shows a mixture of advances and failures, which finds that people are not only being discriminated based on their sex, race or religion, but also on newer criteria such as age, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status and disability. "These barriers to equality can prevent societies from realizing the full potential of today's globalized economy," it stated.

The report said that the ILO's Member States have made great progress in their efforts to curtail discrimination in the workplace. "The condemnation of discrimination in employment and occupation is today almost universal," it noted, citing that

improvements have been made since its first edition was issued four years ago. Since then, most of the ILO's 180 Member States have ratified its two main conventions on discrimination. However, the need to stamp out such discrimination has become far more urgent "in the face of a world that appears increasingly unequal, insecure and unsafe," the study observed.

Prevalence, new cases and deaths from HIV/AIDS, World

To fit all three measures on the same visualization the total number of people living with HIV has been divided by ten (i.e. in 2017 there were 37 million people living with HIV).
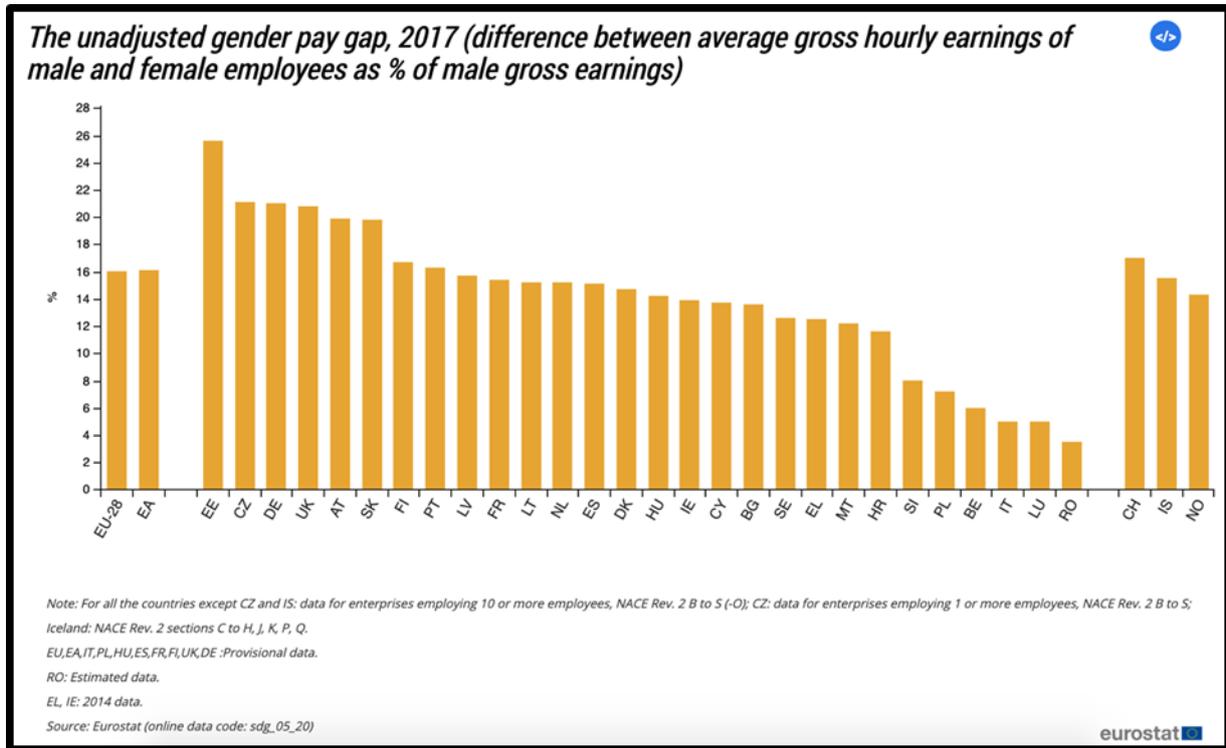
Source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease

Inequalities in income, assets and opportunities "dilute the effectiveness of any action aimed at combating discrimination." The ILO warned that "this may lead to political instability and social upheaval, which upset investment and economic growth." One of the study's major themes is the perpetuation of gender gaps in employment and pay as well as the need for policies that take work and family responsibilities into account to address this issue.

The ILO cites the availability of good-quality jobs for women in legislative, senior or managerial positions as a key indicator in women's improvement, with higher rates of participation signifying a drop in discriminatory barriers. About four-in-ten working women (42%) in the United States say they have faced discrimination on the job because of their gender. They report a broad array of personal experiences, ranging from earning less than male counterparts for doing the same job to being passed over for important assignments, according to a 2017 analysis of Pew Research Center survey data.

Despite the push for greater global commitment to non-discrimination and equality and such landmark initiatives as the "ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS in the world of work" which have revolutionized responses to AIDS in the workplace, the report states that "many shortcomings persist." Enforcement remains weak and oftentimes offices created expressly to tackle discrimination are understaffed or underfunded.

Additionally, a growing informal economy allows for such anti-discrimination laws to be bypassed.

The unadjusted gender pay gap, 2017 (difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees as % of male gross earnings)

Note: For all the countries except CZ and IS: data for enterprises employing 10 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 B to S (-O); CZ: data for enterprises employing 1 or more employees, NACE Rev. 2 B to S;
Iceland: NACE Rev. 2 sections C to H, J, K, P, Q.
EU,EA,IT,PL,HU,ES,FR,FI,UK,DE :Provisional data.
RO: Estimated data.
EL, IE: 2014 data.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: sdg_05_20)

According to Houtenville, a professor at the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire, it has been estimated that in the United States, only 34.9% of individuals with disabilities are employed compared to 76% of their counterparts without disability, and this disparity seems to be increasing overtime. Also, it is asserted that the likelihood of a person with a disability finding a job decreases as the level of disability increases. With almost half a billion people with disabilities being of working age, there is mounting concern regarding discrimination against these people. The World Health Organization shows that employment rates vary across countries, claiming that a person with a disability is less likely to be employed than a person without a disability. Even when employed, workers with disabilities are more likely than their counterparts without disabilities to report underemployment, involuntary part-time, or contingent employment, and lower than average salaries. Notwithstanding legislation specifically targeted at promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities, the employment participation of people with disabilities is still lagging when compared to their able-bodied, and comparably educated, counterparts.

UN Sustainable Development Goals and Workplace Discrimination

The SDG's (explained in further details on page 9) first goal is to prevent poverty, without the discrimination of a group of people. It is also aiming to increase gender

equality, prevent hunger, increase good health and well-being, and the list goes on. Workplace discrimination is not aligned with the SDGs, and eliminating it is necessary in order to achieve it.

On August 2016, the ECOSOC has issued a series of resolutions that seek to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The resolutions were adopted by ECOSOC following recommendations and proposals from its Commissions and expert bodies, and from meetings that took place in 2016.

The ECOSOC resolution on the 'Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) on its Fifteenth Session' (E/RES/2016/26) invites the Committee to place the 2030 Agenda at the center of its work, and to continue to advise ECOSOC on how public administrations can support SDG implementation and progress reviews. It addresses: the role of public institutions for the successful implementation and achievement of the SDGs and targets; integrated policies; participatory decision making and inclusive service delivery; diversity and non-discrimination; oversight and accountability in the implementation of the SDGs; and follow-up.

The resolution notes the importance of a clear framework for allocating responsibilities related to the SDGs and for establishing the working relationships between the national and subnational levels of government; notes the value of the UN e-Government Survey as a tool to support the SDGs; and invites governments to consider measures to understand and address the factors driving discrimination and exclusion in public institutions. On follow-up, it requested the CEPA, at its 16th session, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of the ECOSOC's 2017 session and to contribute to the thematic review of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), "giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the SDGs."

It also requests the UN Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the UN Public Service Awards. The CEPA is an expert body of ECOSOC, and its 15th session took place from 18-22 April 2016.

The resolution on 'Science, Technology and Innovation for Development' (E/RES/2016/23) calls on national governments to: undertake systemic research, including foresight exercises, on new trends in science, technology and innovation (STI) and information and communications technologies (ICTs) and their impact on development, particularly in the context of the 2030 Agenda. It also encourages governments to: review progress on integrating STI in the achievement of the SDGs; promote the application of ICTs in all sectors; and create suitable facilities to recycle and dispose of e-waste.

The resolution encourages the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) to act as a forum for strategic planning, to provide foresight about critical trends in STI in key sectors of the economy, and to draw attention to emerging and disruptive technologies so as to help articulate the "important role" of ICTs and of STI as enablers in the 2030 Agenda. Finally, the resolution encourages the UN

Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to: seek funding proactively for the expansion of STI policy reviews; and look into the feasibility of including elements of strategic foresight and digital ecosystem assessment in policy reviews of STI and ICTs, possibly by including a chapter dedicated to these themes.

The resolution on 'Assessment of the Progress made in the Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society' (E/RES/2016/22), includes sections on: reviewing the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); Internet governance and Forum; enhanced cooperation; and the road ahead. The resolution notes "with concern" that there are still significant digital divides, such as between and within countries and between women and men. It further encourages close alignment between the WSIS process and the 2030 Agenda, as called for in UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 70/125.

The text highlights the urgent need to incorporate recommendations from WSIS outcome documents in the revised guidelines of the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) on preparing the common country assessments and the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). It also invites the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special trust fund established by UNCTAD to support the review and assessment work of the CSTD regarding WSIS follow-up. In addition, the resolution welcomes the 11th meeting of the Internet Governance Forum, in Guadalajara, Mexico, under the theme 'Enabling inclusive and sustainable growth,' and recalls the UNGA proposal to hold a high-level meeting on the overall review of the implementation of the WSIS outcomes in 2025.

The resolution on 'Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the UN' (E/RES/2016/9) expresses "grave concern" at the unprecedented number of people affected and displaced by humanitarian emergencies, and calls on UN Member States, the UN and relevant stakeholders to work together to reduce the specific needs of the most vulnerable, thereby contributing to achieving the SDGs.

The resolution emphasizes that humanitarian response, particularly in protracted crises, needs to be planned over a multi-year framework, as appropriate, and linked with development planning processes. It encourages UN Member States and relevant regional and international organizations to continue to support climate change adaptation and mitigation, and to strengthen disaster risk reduction (DRR) and early warning systems in order to minimize the humanitarian consequences of natural disasters. It also requests the UN Secretary-General to reflect the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the resolution in his next report to ECOSOC and the UNGA on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the UN.

Questions to be addressed by the committee

1. Does your state's governing body implement laws against discrimination in the workplace?

2. What are some of the opportunities that are provided within your state that guarantee a long-lasting and inclusive professional benefits?

3. For the minority within a certain state, what measures can be taken to prevent discrimination in the workplace?

4. What laws can be passed by the UN to help nations implement regulations that decrease the discrimination in the workplace?

5. How can the UN be sure that some treaties, legislations, and conventions are being respected and implemented?

6. What are the causes of discrimination? Can your sovereignty fix the issue from the root?

Further reading

- [Article 27 - Work and employment Enable.](#)

- Seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly [High-level Meeting on the Future of Work](#) organized on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Informal Summary of the President of the General Assembly.

- ECOSOC [Resolution 2008/18](#) Promoting full employment and decent work for all.

- Economic and Social Council E/2009/L.24 [Recovering from the crisis: a Global Jobs Pact.](#)

- United Nations. Results of the fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions of the [Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women](#): Note by the Secretariat.

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Topic B: Towards Sustainable Development

Introduction to the topic

Definition of Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development (SD) is described as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a broad term that will be defined ever so slightly different by different countries and organizations. It is generally defined as having three pillars: economic, social, and environmental. Informally, these are also known as "People, planet, profit", or the triple bottom line (2).

Why Sustainable Development

We only have one Earth, and with the way we as humans are depleting its resources, using up more and more space, emptying its oceans, and destroying the environment and its ecosystems, it cannot last forever. This calls for a type of development that, as is stated in the definition of SD, meets the needs of the current generation, and does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs at the same time. While sustainability is increasingly becoming a priority for many world's countries, e.g. the Paris Agreement being signed in 2016, there is still a need for a massive cultural change. Our current way of development has to be changed to a more sustainable, if we want to mitigate the worst effects of climate change and environmental damage.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

Adopted in 2015 by all UN member states, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the most important declarations made in the UN on the topic of sustainable development. It outlines seventeen goals for UN member states to work towards reaching sustainable development.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)

A forerunner for the goals set in this agenda for 2030 were the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) which were set out in 2000 for 2015. The agenda included 8 goals, and these were commuted to by all 191 member nations. The goals were very diverse and ambitious, something we will see again later in the 2030 agenda. Reasons why they ultimately failed were the uneven implementation in different member states, a lack of clear indicators or objectives, and perhaps most important for this committee an insufficient focus on the sustainability of the goals: the process of not only reaching the goals but doing so in a sustainable way for future generations to benefit from them.

The 2030 Development goals

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). These goals help to set a clear agenda for all UN member states on how to achieve "a better and more sustainable future for all". The goals consider the three pillars of sustainable development, but are relatively broad, occasionally overlap and are dependent on each other (See also section: Criticism on SDG's). In order to explain and explore the concept of SD further, and show the different facets and how these are interconnected, we will look at each of the 17 goals and use them as a framework for SD.

Be aware: as will be described later, including the section 'Questions for Delegates', the SDG's are not holy. They are used simply as the concrete goals the UN set by its Member States, and as a framework highlighting the different facets of SD. Also mind the fact that the information included, especially the described Targets, is not limited to how they are described here; many more information on the goals and their progress exist, and you are encouraged to research those deemed important for your country.

1. *No poverty*

Background: Addressing poverty is key in SD. Its causes are wide-ranging, including employment, vulnerability to social exclusion, diseases, disasters, and other phenomena. There is a 'vicious circle' here; with low poverty the economic growth is low and less resources are available for people's wellbeing and measures that could help to reduce poverty, like education and creation of jobs.

Targets: To eradicate extreme poverty to under 3% of the world's population; reduce at least half of all people living in poverty in all its dimensions. Ensure that everyone has equal access to economic and financial resources and services, and the vulnerability of the poor is reduced.

2. *Zero Hunger*

Background: If done right, our planet can provide enough nutritious food for all its inhabitants in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way. However, as of now,

this is not the case, as our resources shrink, the environment is being degraded, and undernourishment is still a massive global issue.

Targets: By 2030, end malnutrition by ensuring a safe and sufficient access to food for everyone all year round, with extra attention to the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women.

3. Good Health and Wellbeing

Background: Ensuring healthy lives and well-being at all ages is embedded in the very fundamentals of SD. Significant progress has been made in the field, but there are still huge strides to make. More than five million children still die before the age of 5 each year alone, and curable or preventable diseases are still widespread in large parts of the world.

This goal is strongly connected with others: children of mothers with at least primary education are more likely to survive than those with a mother with no education. Also, adequate sanitation (see goal #7) and a steady supply of nutrients (see goal #1) are extremely important.

Targets: By 2030, reduce premature deaths due to incommunicable diseases by 1/3; less than 70 maternal deaths for 100,00 live births. End all preventable deaths of children under the age of 5, end epidemics such age AIDS and malaria, combat other communicable diseases. Other goals include more suitability in for developing countries, strengthening the prevention of alcohol, drug and tobacco usage.

4. Quality Education

Background: Education is seen as a universal human right and a key factor in escaping poverty and allowing a country to (sustainably) develop. It is a key factor in many of the other goals. Education can promote wellbeing, help reduce (gender) inequality, and is also simply associated with economic development. According to the UN, one extra year of education is associated with a reduction of 1.4% in the Gini coefficient (used in economics to calculate the inequality in a system).

Targets: By 2030, ensure that all children complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary school education, and all have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education. Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. Eliminate gender disparities in education.

5. Gender Equality

Background: While progress towards gender equality has been made, also under the MDG's, women and girls around the world continue to suffer from violence and discrimination on a daily basis. Not only is gender equality a fundamental human right: it is simply a necessary condition for the development of a prosperous, sustainable world, as gender inequality affects half of the world population. While progress has been made in the fields of child marriages and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the latter of which has declined by 30% in the last decade, other issues are still widespread. 1 in 5 women between the ages of 15-49 experiences physical or sexual violence every

year and women continue to be underrepresented in many fields of work around the globe.

Targets: End all forms of discrimination against women and girls globally. Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls and eliminate all harmful practices against women and girls such as child, early and forces marriage, FGM. Ensure women's full and affective participation and equal opportunities in leadership at all levels.

6. *Clean Water and Sanitation*

Background: Strongly connected to SDG #3 on healthcare, clean water and sanitation are an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Because of missing or bad infrastructure, millions of people still don't have access to clean water for drinking, cooking, washing, and other needs. Climate change also has an effect on this. When current and future droughts are also brought into the equation, more than 2 billion people could have reduced access to freshwater resources by 2050. Because of its uses in cooking, lack of freshwater is also one of the reasons for malnutrition.

Targets: Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all; adequate access to sanitation and hygiene for all, with special attention to the needs of women and girls. Improving drinking water quality, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater, substantially increasing recycling and water-use efficiency across all sectors.

7. *Affordable and Clean Energy*

Background: Everything that we do in daily life directly or indirectly requires energy of some kind, which is one of the major challenges that the world faces today. It interlinks in major ways therefore with every other goal, and it is easy to see not only the challenges but also the great opportunities that lie in this goal. Relying on clean energy means creating resilience to climate change, new economic and job opportunities, and creating a more sustainable way of living. Today, approximately 3 billion people lack access to clean-cooking solutions, and slightly less than 1 billion people function without electricity at all. Some progress has been made, especially in MEDC's; the share of renewable energy has been increasing, and with the energy usage per unit of GDP has been declining.

Targets: Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services, substantially increase the share of renewable energy globally, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

8. *Decent Work and Economic Growth*

Background: Closely related to SDG #1, goal #8 focusses more on the actual means of achieving economic growth and jobs. Global unemployment rates are 5.7%, but even so, having a job does not mean being able to escape poverty in large parts of the world. Roughly half the world's population lives on or under $2 a day. Furthermore, there is a substantial lack of decent work opportunities and insufficient investments in this sector. While worldwide the GDP continues to grow, some countries show slowing growth rates, as labour productivity decreases, and unemployment rates rise. This all ultimately leads to declining standards of living.

Targets: Sustain per capita growth at the rate of at least 7%, in accordance with national economies by achieving higher levels of productivity (through diversification, technology and innovation), promoting job-oriented policies, and progressively improve global resource efficiency in consumption and production. In terms of the environment, it is a goal to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.

9. Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

Background: Investing in infrastructure, in the broadest sense of the word – transport, irrigation, energy, information and communication technology – will be crucial for achieving sustainable development, by empowering communities, the economy (through increasements in productivity and incomes) and people's health and wellbeing. It is, however, important to consider carbon emissions in manufacturing processes and infrastructure construction and upkeep. This SDG is mainly founded upon investments and technological progress and implementation.

Targets: Develop equally accessible, reliable and sustainable infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being. Promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and significantly raise industry's share of employment and GDP around the world. Upgrade and/or retrofit infrastructure and industries to make them sustainable.

10. Reducing Inequality

Background: As previously mentioned, many nations still have large amounts of their population living below poverty lines, and this SDG highlights the strides that can be made by reducing inequality within these populations. It is becoming clearer that just economic growth is not enough to reduce inequality, and that other factors have to be taken into account. There is therefore a need for policy, besides this economic growth, that is universal, and pays attention to the needs of disadvantaged populations.

Targets: Progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average; empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all; ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome. Adopt fiscal, wage and social protection policies.

11. Sustainable Cities and Communities

Background: With more and more people moving into urban areas, and the current rate of worldwide urbanization not showing tendency to slow down any time soon, it is extremely important at how cities can be developed sustainably, now and into the future, for the great number of people that will live in them. By 2030, over 5 billion people will live in cities. This calls for efficient and sustainable urban planning and management. Cities have all the same problems as the rest of the world, as also illustrated in the rest of the SDG's, like poverty, hunger, lack of good healthcare, (lack of) access to sanitation, all these problems need to be dealt with differently. Next to this, current urban challenges like congestion, lack of basic services, rising air pollution and declining infrastructure will only get worse through time if not tackled with efficient and sustainable solutions.

Targets: Ensure access for everyone to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade existing slums; provide access to safe, affordable,

accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, whilst also improving safety and expanding public transport in particular. Enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization, amongst other ways by promoting participatory and sustainable human settlement planning.

12. Responsible Consumption and Production

Background: While it is also an SDG to promote economic growth and consumption, we must be weary of over-consumption and -production, which will always have a negative effect on both the environment and mankind. Not only is it better for the environment to avoid it, it also helps reduce future economic and social costs, which strengthens economic competitiveness and reduces poverty.

Targets: Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, achieve sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, halve per capita global food waste and reduce losses along production and supply chains, achieve economically sound management of chemicals and all wastes through their life cycle, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

13. Climate Action

Background: One of the more focused and concrete goals, SDG 13 focusses on preventing climate change from occurring as much as possible. It is a process that affects every country on every continent, disrupts economies, and costs everyone dearly. Greenhouse gasses are at their highest levels in history, with weather patterns changing, sea levels rising, and the environment being degraded. The pace of change towards more environmentally friendly solutions is quickening, but it is still not fast enough. It is an issue that does not respect national borders and requires the utmost cooperation from everyone in every member state to combat it.

Targets: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries, integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, improve education to raise awareness. Implement the commitment to the UNFCC to mobilize $100 billion jointly annually from 2020 to address the need of developing countries.

14. Life Below Water

Background: Earth's oceans cover 71% of its area, and over 90% of its biosphere. They drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for mankind, by providing and regulating our rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe. Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. The careful management of these unmissable resources is needed for a sustainable future. Processes like deterioration of coastal waters by pollution and ocean acidification need to be combatted.

Targets: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, by 2020 sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas.

15. Life on Land

Background: Although the oceans might regulate our weather and water, most of our food, oxygen, and living space comes from land; indirectly, 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihood as well. Forests cover over 30% of the Earth's surface and are some of the areas with the highest biodiversity on earth, with more than 80% of all terrestrial species living in them. Thirteen million of hectares of forest are lost every year, and its biodiversity is at risk. If we want to develop sustainably, we must conserve these areas, in order to protect the environment, and our own oxygen supply. Desertification of land, as a consequence of climate change and soil degradation, also poses a massive threat: over 2.6 billion people depend directly on agriculture, and indirectly almost all of the world population, but over half of all land used for agriculture is negatively affected by these processes.

Targets: By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests. By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna.

16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Background: In order for a sustainable future for society and all of the world's population, we need to work towards achieving peaceful, inclusive and fairs societies with robust, independent and fair justice systems. Threats like international homicide, violence against children, human trafficking and sexual violence need to be combatted and are needed to promote inclusive societies. Corruption needs to be tackled, along with bribery, theft, and tax evasion.

Targets: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere; end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children; promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all; substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms; develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

17. Partnerships for the Goals

Background: A successful implementation of all the previously mentioned goals requires cooperation: between governments, the private sector, NGO's, and the general public. There needs to be a shared vision, which includes successfully implementing all the SDGs, on all levels: global, national, regional and local. Without working together, none of these goals can ever be achieved, and it is in the best interest of the entire world population and future generations to work towards a sustainable future.

Targets: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection; developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments; mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple resources; assist developing countries in attaining

long-term debt sustainability; adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for the least developed countries.

Criticism of the UN SDG's

Despite being as detailed as they are, and perhaps even because of it, there is plenty of criticism towards the UN SDG's. These points of criticism include, but are not limited to:

- **Competing goals**: some goals may be (partially) mutually exclusive; for example, continuing global economic growth (SDG #8) and the ecological sustainability goals

- **No focus:** while there are 17 different goals with 169 separate targets, they all have seemly equal priority. This could be seen as a weakness because it might not be possible to 'do everything first'; priorities may have to be set, and the SDG's do not do this.
  - Related to this: the high number of goals (17) and targets (169) has been met with criticism, saying that the agenda is too broad.

- **Overlapping goals**: some goals are built on the same principles and share very similar targets; for example, goals #1, #8 and #10 all essentially have to do with reducing poverty and are only really differentiated by their different angle of approach to the issue.

Questions to be addressed by the committee

The term 'Sustainable Development'

Remember that SD is a very broad concept that encompasses many different aspects and processes. It is difficult to grasp as one process. When researching your country, try and research both the concept as a whole but also individual aspects. For example: countries might have a stance on the 17 SDG's, and this is important to know. However, they will also have different policy for a lot of the different goals and other aspects of SD. Make sure you research the topic from both these approaches.

The Sustainable Development goals

Different member states have different goals as priorities. In this guide, we explained the different facets of sustainable development mainly using the 17 SDG's. When researching your country, be aware that:

- Global statistics and figures differ from national statistics and figures. An example: reducing poverty to under 3% (SDG #1) will be a major challenge

for Angola or Mali, where the amount of people under the $1,90 poverty line are about 30% and 41%, respectively, but not so much for Luxembourg, who has already achieved this with 0.2% currently, or Pakistan, who have almost achieved it with 3.9%.

- o Try and find out what priorities your country has, or if it prioritizes any goals of the SDG's at all.

- As previously mentioned, there is a lot of potentially valid criticism towards the SDG's. Try to find out how your country views them: not only what the official policy on the SDG's is, but also how you could potentially avoid failing them, like with the MDG's.

- There is a difference between official statements regarding SD and the SDG's and what a country actually tries to do. Be critical towards your country while researching and look for disparities between their stated goals and commitments, and the actual implemented policy and measures.

- While the SDG's have been agreed upon by all UN Member States and they are a good indication of the different facets of SD, they are not holy (see the sections on defining SD and criticism of the SDG's) and you should not solely research them, but also research other ways that your country attempts SD, or other goals it might have, that are not necessarily linked to the SDG's.

- o Make sure to research important figures on sustainability for your country, also those that are not included in the SDG's.

Further reading

- [Detailed definitions of 17 SDG's](#):

    – The accompanying fact sheets on the goals, progress and targets, which can be found on the pages of the individual goals

- Powerpoint by Dr. Francois Lategan – Development and the Economic Process. Will be shared with you ASAP

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General tips

- Prepare well: a good preparation is half the work! Plus, it will make the conference a whole lot easier and more enjoyable. Make sure you know the issues, you know your country's views, the facts about the issues in your country (whether your country is honest about them or not), and what measures your country might want to bring to the table.
  - o Back your arguments up using facts and figures; look for statistics as recent as possible.

- Try and be as impartial as possible. This can be difficult, especially when you disagree with what the country that you represent states – but it is important for the course of the conference.

- Concerning statistics: do not confuse percentages and percentage points. For example: if one year, 10% of youths participate in MUN's, and the next year 15%, this is a **percentage point** increase of 5%, but a **percentage** increase of 50%.

- *Optional*: if you feel like you are well prepared and know everything as described above well, here are some extra things you could do to prepare extra:
  - o Know your friends: find out which other countries in the committee (we will get a list of member states to you if possible) your country agrees with on (part of) the topics, so that you know with whom you could write resolutions and where you could expect support.
    - ▪ Related to this, know your place in the world: know who you are allied with, or if you are somehow dependant on other countries for certain things.
  - o What is your country's diplomacy style? It is generally wise to stick as close as possible to how your country would act in real life – offensive or defensive debate, a more passive or active approach – and if you can, try and find out or reason how your country might act.
    - ▪ However, this does not mean if you regard your country having a passive approach to be silent – we do expect everyone to be active in debate.
  - o Write (parts of) speeches – if you feel like you might be more comfortable giving, for example, your opening speech on a topic if you have it prepared to a degree you feel comfortable with, you are of course welcome to write (parts of) your speech(es) beforehand.
    - ▪ However, be aware that you don't know beforehand where the debate will go, and you will also have to improvise and can't

prepare every speech beforehand. Finding sentences or snippets you can use is always a good idea though.

o Write resolution clauses – only for experienced MUN delegates; we don't expect you at all to write clauses beforehand, but if you feel like you are experienced enough and know the rules of procedure and the format of a resolution, you are of course welcome to prepare clauses beforehand.

- But remember, focus on the core preparation first, and only if you really feel like you have that well prepared focus on these things.

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