LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

I welcome you all to FairGaze MUN 2022, United Nations Economic and Social Council. At all points in time remember that this document is just a research-starting document and the debate is not limited to the topics given in the Background Guide.

Understand that how we as the drafters of the Background Guide follow the same procedure as you do i.e. reading PDFs, Web pages like Wiki, news articles and thus you'll feel it has been taken from somewhere or the other but this is how it is. The only thing the Background Guide has to do is give direction to delegates and tell the important points of debate in the agenda and this Background Guide shall do the same.

Get ready for a day of great debate and a great experience for you and for us as well.

A perfect order for starting the preparation for this MUN will be:
1. Reading the Background Guide
2. Understanding the Committee's role and mandate
3. Reading and understating your country role and position on the agenda
4. Understanding the agenda and researching in depth, clearing the basics regarding everything that comes to you.

All the best and feel free to contact us for any doubt and clarifications.

Regards,
Executive Board

Trisha Thomas
Chairperson

Parashree Gupta
Vice Chairperson

EVIDENCE IN COMMITTEE

Evidence or proof is from the following sources will be accepted as credible in the committee:

1. News Sources:

a) State operated News Agencies: These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are:

i. Russia: RIA Novosti (https://ria.ru/)

ii. Iran: IRNA (https://en.irna.ir/)

iii. China: Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/)

2. Government Reports: These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Some examples are,

i. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America (https://www.state.gov/) or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation (http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/)

ii. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (https://www.mea.gov.in/) or People's Republic of China (https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/)

iii. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports (https://www.un.org/en/members/)

iv. Multilateral Organisations like NATO (https://www.nato.int/), ASEAN (https://asean.org/), OPEC (https://www.opec.org/), etc.

3. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board.

i. UN Bodies like the UNSC (https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/), UNGA (https://www.un.org/en/ga/), etc.

ii. UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (https://www.iaea.org/), World Bank (https://www.worldbank.org/), International Monetary Fund (https://www.imf.org/), International Committee of the Red Cross (https://www.icrc.org/), etc.

iii. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System (https://www.ats.aq/), the International Criminal Court (https://www.icc-cpi.int/), etc.

NOTE: Under no circumstances will sources like Reuters (https://www.reuters.com/),Wikipedia (http://www.wikipedia.org/), Amnesty International (http://www.amnesty.org/), Human Rights Watch (https://www.hrw.org/) or newspapers like the Guardian (http://www.guardian.co.uk/), Times of India (https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/), etc. be accepted as PROOF/EVIDENCE. But they can be used for better understanding of any issue or even be brought up in debate if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a Government.

COMMITTEE HISTORY AND MANDATE

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), under the overall authority of the General Assembly, coordinates the economic and social work of the United Nations and the UN family of organisations. As the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues and for formulating policy recommendations, the Council plays a key role in fostering international cooperation for development. It also consults with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), thereby maintaining a vital link between the United Nations and civil society. The Council has 54 members, elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms. It meets throughout the year and holds a major session in July, during which a high-level meeting of Ministers discusses major economic, social and humanitarian issues.

The work of ECOSOC involves so many issues it has many commissions to help it. Some are known as functional commissions. They meet regularly and report back to it on such issues as human rights, social development, the status of women, crime prevention, narcotic drugs, and science and technology. Other regional commissions deal with special problems that people living in different geographical areas face. ECOSOC has five regional commissions that promote economic development and cooperation in their respective regions. While the Security Council's primary responsibility is maintaining peace, ECOSOC focuses on promoting social progress and better standards of living. Achieving international security and social progress go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other. Poverty and the denial of human rights greatly increase the risk of instability and violence. Similarly, war sets back development. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) coordinates the work of the 14 UN specialised agencies, ten functional commissions and five regional commissions, receives reports from nine UN funds and programmes and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to Member States. ECOSOC's purview extends over 70 percent of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system.

The mandate of the Economic and Social Council was defined by the Charter of the United Nations and various General Assembly resolutions. The responsibilities of the United Nations in the area of international economic and social cooperation established by the United Nations Charter are "vested in the General Assembly and, under the authority of the General Assembly, in the Economic and Social Council".

The UN Charter mandates ECOSOC to promote higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress; solutions of international economic, social and health problems; international cultural and educational cooperation; and universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

INTRODUCTION

The urban environment is shaped by infrastructure, which also powers inclusive and long-lasting economic prosperity. It is our duty to provide resilient infrastructure that supports economic growth and social well-being and is of the highest quality. Promoting inclusive, sustainable, cheap, and equitable access for everyone is essential, and new, cutting-edge methods should be used to accomplish this. Those innovations must be used for promoting democratic and citizen education. Inclusive and sustainable infrastructure development, can unleash competitive and dynamic economic forces that create jobs and income. They are crucial in the introduction and promotion of new technology, in facilitating global trade, and in enabling resource efficiency. To fully realise this potential, the world still has a long way to go. If they are to reach the 2030 objective, least developed nations in particular must speed up the growth of their manufacturing sector and increase their investment in scientific research and innovation.

Ageing, degraded or non-existent infrastructure makes conducting good business challenging. Business relies on materials, resources, labour and service support from all corners of the world and the ability to access them efficiently is key to establishing new markets. Computing and technology-based skills are of significant value to most businesses today, and consumers of common goods and services live on every continent. However, basic infrastructure supporting technologies, communications, transportation, and sanitation that business relies on is not universally available, hindering economic growth and societal progress.

This presents an opportunity for business. By committing to sustainable industrialization and promoting innovation across company operations, businesses can contribute to development efforts in the regions in which they operate through upgrading local infrastructure, investing in resilient energy and communications technologies, and making these technologies available to all people, including marginalised groups, who might not have access otherwise. Global companies can also promote inclusive infrastructure

development by bringing valuable financial services and employment opportunities to smaller and/or minority-owned businesses.

THE BASIS OF THE AGENDA

The sustainable goal 9 states: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. SDG 9 advocates inclusive and sustainable industrialization and calls for the construction of robust and sustainable infrastructure. Additionally, it acknowledges the value of innovation and research in addressing long-term social, economic, and environmental problems. Infrastructure, industry and innovation are inter – connected pillars. One is not possible without the other. The goal of creating socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable economic growth is shared by all of these pillars. In order to build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation, it will be necessary to overcome resource constraints, build and strengthen developing countries' capacities, and look for novel ways to solve development problems if SDG 9 is to be achieved by 2030. SDG 9 is strongly linked to other SDGs pertaining to job creation, sustainable livelihoods, better health, technology and skills development, gender equality, food security, green technologies, and climate change. It contains about 20 objectives and indicators related to its three pillars.

In 2017 ECOSOC hosted a meeting of the "High – Level Political Forum". The goal 9 was one of the important aims. According to paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, Member States have determined that the HLPF would conduct voluntary assessments of the 2030 Agenda on a regular basis, with participation from developed and developing nations, as well as relevant UN organisations and other stakeholders. The evaluations, which were state-led and included ministerial and other high-level participants who were relevant, offer a platform for collaborations, including through the involvement of significant groups and other pertinent stakeholders. 43 nations have volunteered to submit the HLP with their national voluntary evaluations in 2017.

COVID -19 AND SDG-9

The coronavirus pandemic has revealed the urgent need for resilient infrastructure. The Asian Development Bank notes that critical infrastructure in the region remains far from adequate in many countries, despite the rapid economic growth and development the region has experienced over the past decade. The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific highlights that making infrastructure resilient to disasters and climate change will require an additional investment of $434 billion per year. This sum may need to be even greater in some subregions, such as the Pacific small island developing states.

The COVID-19 event has served to illustrate the importance of numerous infrastructure systems and services, both as a means of sustaining economic and social activity and for enabling responses to unanticipated threats and problems, as well as a possible source of vulnerability. In the current crisis, the extent and quality of infrastructure related to health such as hospitals, water, and sanitation have proven to be important for the effectiveness of responses. Furthermore, there may be scope to consider where infrastructure can play a role more generally in support of healthcare value chains, for example through more efficient trade and transportation infrastructure to support delivery of essential goods. The importance of broader social and economic infrastructure, such as transport systems and communication infrastructure, was also demonstrated. Notably, the crisis has refocused attention on social or "soft" infrastructure, which in the context of resilience is frequently eclipsed by hard infrastructure like electricity and transportation. Modern societies are dependent on these infrastructures to uphold the population's economic, health, educational, cultural, and social standards. Hospitals are an integral element of healthcare systems that only work successfully when all components are robust, despite being on the front lines of the pandemic's effects and reaction. The ability and capacity of government response has been uneven across countries or among regions and municipalities within countries. The capacities of emerging and developing economies to invest in the health response have been limited, given tighter borrowing constraints as a result of the spillovers of the crisis. Critical support is needed in some parts of the world in order to

bolster health response and limit the spread of the virus. Despite increased mobilisation after the 2014-2016 Ebola crisis, investment in pandemics preparedness and response has been insufficient.

All sectors have experienced disruption as a result of the direct effects of COVID-19 and confinement measures. This is due to a variety of factors, including disruption in supply chains, labour shortages for infrastructure projects (construction) and operations, delays and cancellations, demand shocks, as well as interruptions to investment and procurement processes. When feasible, infrastructure projects that rely on single-source supply chains should think about backup or alternative sources of supplies in case there are any future interruptions.

Infrastructure systems are intricate and interconnected; when catastrophes or threats manifest, an interruption in electricity, for example, can bring down transportation and healthcare networks. In 2017, there were significant negative effects on the economy, public health, and safety in Cape Town, South Africa. Because of interdependencies, even seemingly little events can have significant cascade impacts on infrastructure. Due to a software error, a power-grid failure that should have only affected a limited number of people in Ohio, United States, in 2003 cascaded across the northeastern United States and Canada, ultimately affecting 55 million people (OECD, 2019). The concept of resilience is strongly linked to risk management frameworks as it is implied that something that is not resilient is somehow exposed to disruption, failure, or inadequacy. Resilience refers to the capacity of systems to absorb a disturbance, recover from disruptions and adapt to changing conditions while retaining essentially the same function as prior to the disruptive shock at an acceptable service level (OECD, 2020m). Time horizon also matters for infrastructure resilience, as the probability of a hazard occurring increases with the length of time considered. A key consideration is that resilience planning and risk management is a *process* throughout the life-cycle of infrastructure, both at the asset- and system-level (OECD, 2019).

Challenges in developing a resilient infrastructure with special emphasis on SDG 9

Instability, such as interstate conflict, making sure programmes suit the local context is an example of implementation and Governance, such as the political will to convert development programmes into long-term, sustainable practices. These problems first need to be solved internally so that solutions for international, world problems can be solved. "We can't achieve sustainable and resilient development of infrastructure without the internet" – Jane Coffin Former Senior Vice President. Lessons learned during the pandemic's first year cannot be disregarded. The world's population is nearly half without access to the Internet. Inadequate infrastructure, a lack of accessible services, a lack of digital skills required to take advantage of online possibilities are just a few of the factors contributing to the widening digital divide.

An essential tool for sustainable development is the Internet. It enables human potential and offers a foundation for the emergence of the digital economy. Connecting those who are being left behind is more crucial as the Internet and digital technology become more necessary. Given that we are still very far from achieving this objective, the SDGs ask for universal and inexpensive access in least developed nations by 2020. The existing digital gap runs the risk of escalating other divides, such as economic and gender inequality, if we don't act soon.

Global coordination and cooperation still lack in the globe. An excellent example of what cooperation can do: A recent collaboration in rural Zimbabwe involving locals, a local Internet service provider, and government organisations was able to connect 80 schools in the area, extending their access to knowledge and resources to a global scale. The regional hospital became one of the finest in the nation as a result of its ability to link healthcare experts with peers throughout the world. On hand for the most recent launch ceremony were representatives from UNICEF, the ITU Development Sector, the Zimbabwean Ministry of Communications, POTRAZ, the industry watchdog, and the Zimbabwe Chapter of the Internet Society. They realised what was possible when partners cooperate.

Sustainable development and infrastructure are inextricably intertwined. Buildings alone are thought to be responsible for more than 30% of the world's resource consumption and energy end use, while the development and

maintenance of infrastructure are responsible for around 70% of greenhouse gas emissions. A WHO analysis predicts that by 2030, there would be twice as many fatalities caused by pollution from major infrastructure companies. Currently, there are 150,000 fatalities annually. Does that imply that halting all infrastructure building is the only way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and save the planet? Please pay more attention to how the SDGs and infrastructure are related. Sustainable infrastructure can help build resilience in countries while protecting against exposure to extreme climate change events. An example of low carbon infrastructure is railway infrastructure that reduces the number of carbon-emitting trucks. The demand for this type of infrastructure and the worldwide drive for economic growth are high in both developed countries and in developing countries as well. It is widely acknowledged that the ambitions set out by the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will only be met by a transition towards sustainable energy requiring large investments in new infrastructure, and that limiting climate change to any level.

The need to engage all stakeholders in implementation of SDG 9 has become pressing in view of the food crisis, energy crisis, global recession and financial crisis. Under- developed and developing countries do not have sufficient funds to fulfil the basic necessities of their citizens, to do so their public debt is increasing. Developed countries can allocate funds for sustainable and resilient erecting various infrastructure but what about countries who are dependent on other developed countries. There exists inequitable distribution of wealth, lack of proper planning, corruption, and red tapism. Developed or developing countries do not only have to deal with financial aspects, faulty management of bureaucrats, lack of proper economic planning, lack of resources.

The committee needs to ponder upon the above-mentioned problems and come up with valid solutions. The mandate has to be kept in mind while suggesting solutions. Delegates are free to research about other aspects as well to give the committee a new direction.

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The second annual Multi-Stakeholder Forum Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) addressed 'STI for a Changing World – Focus on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14.' An IISD Reporting Services briefing note and an IISD SDG Knowledge Hub story explain that the Forum featured innovation pitches for scientific and technological solutions addressing the six SDGs, including: a platform for job seekers in India to apply for jobs; a knowledge exchange system connecting farmers in rural areas in Bangladesh with experts from cities all over the world through smart phones; and a 'virtual farmers market' in Zambia. The event identified takeaways as, inter alia, the need for: incentives to strengthen the science-policy interface through the UN; private sector investment in innovation for the SDGs; roadmaps for tracking progress; ICT infrastructure expansion for development and STI efforts; advancing on ways to align STI national plans with the SDGs; and the STI Forum to conduct a "horizon-scanning" exercise on changes in the STI field. During the event, UNGA President Peter Thomson emphasised the need to manage risks associated with STI advancements, including protection from cyberattacks, privacy concerns and loss of jobs due to innovation. The STI Forum convenes annually to discuss cooperation on STI around thematic areas for SDG implementation.

Immediately following the STI Forum, the UNGA President convened an SDG Action Event on Innovation and Connectivity, during which representatives from major corporations, many from Silicon Valley, engaged with countries on how emerging technologies can help implement the SDGs. Participants urged countries to foster a culture of risk-taking while also discussing anxiety posed by technological change and how to overcome it. UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed called SDG 9 a "docking station" for all 17 Goals. UNGA President Peter Thompson said the meeting had "planted a seed" about the need for an innovation mechanism at the UN. Governments also, inter alia, stressed the need to: address citizens' fears about losing jobs to technology and help them prepare for new jobs; and provide resources for countries to implement new technologies and close the digital divide.

Also in an effort to advance SDG 9, ECOSOC convened a Special Meeting on Innovations in Infrastructure Development and Promoting Sustainable Industrialization that highlighted SDG 9's relevance and interlinkages with other Goals and targets. Two preparatory events convened in advance of the Special Meeting: one focused on infrastructure development and promoting sustainable industrialization (Dakar, Senegal, on 26 March); and one on agriculture and agro-industries development (Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, from 24-26 April). The preparatory meetings helped ensure consideration of perspectives from Africa and countries in special situations, which lag behind in poverty eradication, infrastructure and industrialization.

The meeting identified infrastructure's potential and limitations and pointed to infrastructure, industrial production, technology, and digital economies as key drivers of growth and poverty eradication. ECOSOC President Frederick Shava highlighted that lack of transport, energy and communications in Africa limits opportunities, and lamented "so much untapped potential," stressing people's desire and capacity to create and innovate. UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, underscored the importance of ICTs for vulnerable countries, citing their multiplier effects in agriculture, education, health, trade, and governance. The Meeting also sought to promote development cooperation and attract investment, and strengthen ECOSOC's policy guidance with respect to SDG 9.

An IISD SDG Knowledge Hub guest article by the World Wide Web Foundation describes the gender digital divide and why it should matter for the SDGs. The article explains that extreme gender inequalities exist in Internet access, digital skills and online rights across developing countries, due to high costs, lack of digital skills, scarcity of content relevant to women's empowerment, and barriers to women speaking freely and privately online. The article recommends that countries undertake efforts to close the gender

digital divide, which will help realise, inter alia: SDG target 9.c (achieve universal affordable Internet access by 2020); SDG target 1.4 (ensure equal access to basic services and appropriate new technology for women and men); and SDG target 5.b (implement policies to empower women through technology).

An UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) publication, the World Investment Report 2017: Investment and the Digital Economy, finds that, while digital enterprises (Internet and e-commerce platforms) have grown dramatically, more than 60 of the top 100 are based in three countries (the US, the UK and Germany) and only four are based in developing countries. An UNCTAD press release explains that the report urges targeted investment policies in developing countries to build connectivity infrastructure, promote digital firms and support digitalization of the broader economy.

The following are the list of international human rights instruments to keep the process of achieving SDG 9 in check:

1) Right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its application [UDHR art. 27; ICESCR art. 15(1)(b)]

2) Right to access information [UDHR art. 19; ICCPR art. 19(2)]

3) Right to adequate housing, including land and resources [UDHR art. 25; ICESCR art. 11]

4) Equal rights of women to financial credit and rural infrastructure [CEDAW art. 13(b), art. 14(2)]

5) Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR 1948)

6) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD 1965)

7) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966)

8) International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR 1966)

9) International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979)

10) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT 1984)

11) Declaration on the Right to Development (UNDRD 1986)

12) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC 1989)

13) International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW 1990)

14) Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW 1993)

15) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OP-1 2000)

16) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD 2006)

17) International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances (ICPEP 2006)

18) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP 2007)

POINTS TO PONDER ON

1) What are the linkages of SDG 9 with ICTs and other SGDs?
2) How do you think SDG 9 and SDG 13 can be fulfilled simultaneously?

3) How do you think instability, implementation and governance can be handled with respect to SDG 9?
4) "The universal nature of the SDGs implies that countries should clean up their own act and contribute to helping others to do so; but it also implies that their action must be commensurate with the extent to which they are part of the problem." Discuss.

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