United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Agenda: Building Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure to Achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9.

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Members,

We hope you and your family members are in joyous health. It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you all to the simulation of ECOSOC, at CAGS Fairgaze MUN, 2023 The study guide has been made with the sole purpose of guiding you all and to help you understand the agenda. The guide should not be used as the only reference for research and instead should be considered as the initial point where one could start their research but not end it.

The topic at hand is vast and complex and it is advisable for you to address the agenda holistically, which will ensure that the debate addresses various sub-aspects within the larger agenda. With just a few days left for the conference, we hope that you have already started your research and will be trying to cover all topics, which shall help you in contributing to the committee to the best of your ability. While this guide will be directing your research, we would still appreciate it if you go beyond this and come up with innovative discussions in the committee.

In the duration of the conference, we will not only be taking on the role of your moderators and adjudicators but also help you understand the complexities of research, diplomacy and negotiation. We hope to be able to walk you through the functioning of the ECOSOC and boost your research and oratory capabilities.

The working language for this committee will be English. For all those who will be participating in their first MUN through this conference, it is our responsibility to inform you that there will be a briefing session for you all on the Rules of Procedure beforehand.

Lastly, we would like to say that despite the exciting agenda before us, any simulation is worthless without the active participation of the committee members. We wish you all the very best, have fun researching. Looking forward to seeing you all at the conference.

Yash Bhandari,
Chairperson

Committee Mandate

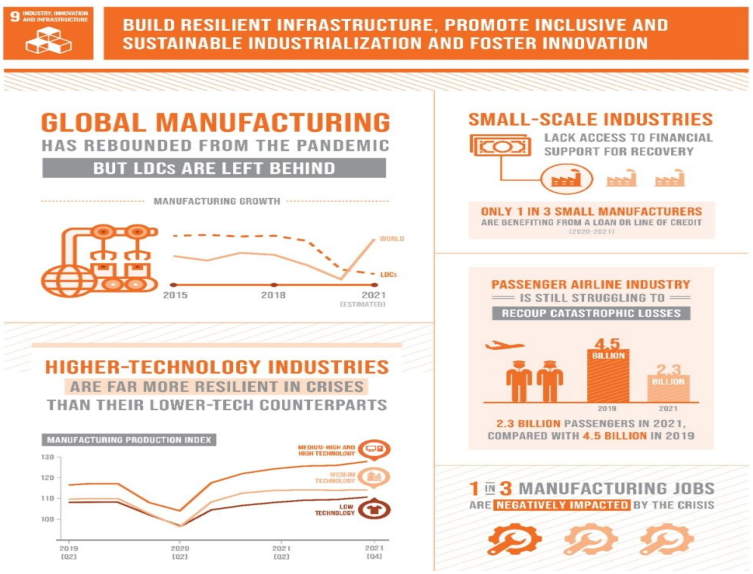
Established in 1945, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six organs of the United Nations. Its membership comprises 54 nations, elected by the General Assembly for a term of three
years each based on geographical representation.The ECOSOC has an extensive role to play in coordination, policy review and fostering of cooperation between states, civil society and the UN's bodies. The ECOSOC's mandate includes promoting economic and social progress through cooperation and policy recommendations. It directs the discourse between states regarding issues of development and is one of the key facilitators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also has the responsibility of
providing policy outlines and technical expertise to the UNGA and member states on social and economic matters and supervision of its commissions, expert bodies and work groups.

Through this committee's agenda, we look to explore the different dimensions of Sustainable Infrastructure , and whether this has truly expanded the scope of development for achieving the SDG's by 2030. We hope to look at ways in which current global and regional infrastructure programs should be restructured and improved. In today's world, the rapid currents of instability threaten to undermine the economic and social growth made by several emerging and underdeveloped nations. In this context, infrastructure becomes the backbone of a stable economy. However, member states also have to consider that money spent on building these infrastructures should not make the state dependent on loans and financial assistance, leading to huge amounts of debt- traps. Therefore, as a committee, through dialogue and discussion, we seek to understand how to build resilient infrastructure systems and improve current policy to reflect the intricacies of our agenda.

Introduction

Sdg 9 Goals: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

The concept of sustainable infrastructure refers to equipment and systems that are designed to meet the population's essential service needs — including roads, bridges, telephone pylons, hydroelectric power stations, etc. — based on all-round sustainable principles. This means the infrastructure is



environmentally friendly from end to end, and that includes economic, financial, social and institutional factors.

With urban areas growing exponentially, especially in emerging countries, sustainable infrastructure is showing its worth as a more efficient, productive and environmentally friendly option. Furthermore, according to the World Bank, these facilities prove more profitable as they make for more reliable services and greater resilience to extreme weather events, as well as lessening the impact of natural threats to people and the economy. Sustainable and quality infrastructure plays a crucial role in society and economy. It is indispensable for delivering better and more inclusive economic, social and environmental conditions, and for supporting growth by expanding access to vital services and improving economic opportunities for all.

To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050, significant investment in sustainable and resilient infrastructure is required. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that USD 6.9 trillion per year are needed up to 2050 for investment in infrastructure to meet development goals and create a low carbon, climate resilient future. According to the Global Infrastructure Hub, however, there is currently a multi-trillion dollar gap in these required investments, and evidence shows that the majority of investments continue to go into "business-as-usual" infrastructure.

During the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), which met in Nairobi in March of 2022, Member States adopted a resolution on Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure. This new resolution builds on a 2019 UNEA resolution by encouraging Member States to:

- implement the International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure;
- promote investment in sustainable and resilient infrastructure,
- natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions;
- cooperate internationally to strengthen frameworks, including for financing; and,
- provide opportunities for engaging relevant stakeholders.

The Sustainable Development Agenda

On 1 January 2016, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit — officially came into force. Over the next fifteen years, with these new Goals that universally apply to all, countries will mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The SDGs, also known as Global Goals, build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and aim to go further to end all forms of poverty. The new Goals are unique in that they call for action by all countries, poor, rich and middle-income to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with

strategies that build economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

While the SDGs are not legally binding, governments are expected to take ownership and establish national frameworks for the achievement of the 17 Goals. Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review of the progress made in implementing the Goals, which will require quality, accessible and timely data collection. Regional follow-up and review will be based on national-level analyses and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level.

What is sustainable development?

• Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

• Sustainable development calls for concerted efforts towards building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for people and planet.

• For sustainable development to be achieved, it is crucial to harmonize three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These elements are interconnected and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies.

• Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. To this end, there must be promotion of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.

Are the Sustainable Development Goals legally binding?

• No. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not legally binding.

• Nevertheless, countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving the 17 Goals.

• Implementation and success will rely on countries' own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes.

• Countries have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels, with regard to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets over the next 15 years.

• Actions at the national level to monitor progress will require quality, accessible and timely data collection and regional follow-up and review.

Sustainable Development Goal 9

Investments in infrastructure – transport, irrigation, energy and information and communication technology – are crucial to achieving sustainable development and empowering communities in many countries. It has long been recognized that growth in productivity and incomes, and improvements in health and education outcomes require investment in infrastructure.

Inclusive and sustainable industrial development is the primary source of income generation, allows for rapid and sustained increases in living standards for all people, and provides the technological solutions to environmentally sound industrialization. Technological progress is the foundation of efforts to achieve environmental objectives, such as increased resource and energy-efficiency. Without technology and innovation, industrialization will not happen, and without industrialization, development will not happen.

Goal 9 Targets

• Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human wellbeing, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

• Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.

• Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.

• By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities.

• Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.

• Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, 9

ECOSOC Study Guide least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States 18.

• Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities.

• Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.

Progress of Goal 9 in 2017

Despite steady improvements in manufacturing output and employment, renewed investment will be needed in the least developed countries to build needed infrastructure and ensure the doubling of industry's share of GDP in those countries by 2030.

• Efficient transportation services generate employment and wealth and drive economic development. In 2015, the estimated global economic impact (both direct and indirect) of air transport was $2.7 trillion, equivalent to 3.5 per cent of global GDP. The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States represent far less air travel and freight volumes, with each country group accounting for only 1 per cent to 2.7 per cent of the global total.

• Manufacturing is a principal driver of economic development, employment and social stability. Globally, manufacturing value added as a share of GDP increased from 15.3 per cent in 2005 to 16.2 per cent in 2016. In 2016, manufacturing value added per capita amounted to $4,621 in Europe and Northern America, compared to about $100 in the least developed countries.

• As many countries move to more efficient and less energy-intensive industries, their Finance: A Challenge for SDG 9

A strong sustainability challenge

Climate change also puts pressure on natural resources that are essential for sustaining human civilization. In the past, resource scarcity was often presented as a critical challenge, but for much of the twentieth century, resource prices actually fell. The combination of rapid economic expansion, continued population growth and a changing climate raises the spectre of resource scarcities. In the medium and long term, it may lead to a strong sustainability challenge. There is significant scope for substitution in many areas, yet certain forms of natural capital including the ecological services they provide cannot be replaced by manmade capital. Their exploitation has thus to be limited so as to preserve the overall capacity of ecosystems to provide those services (Ayres, 2007). Land, water and energy in particular are

critical resources for humanity, and their availability and use are tightly interconnected, with multiple feedback channels between them. All of them have strong links to agriculture and food production. Large unmet needs at the global level require and will inevitably lead to a further expansion in their use and exploitation. Combined with the additional impact of climate change, this expansion may very well lead to much tighter supplies, and thus to price volatilities and sustained price increases. If scarcities arise and if limits to substitutability are reached, distributional conflicts will have to be addressed at the national and global levels, as well as with respect to purposes of use. The common drivers of resource use are population growth and economic expansion and the associated lifestyle changes. The global population will continue to expand, but population growth will take place largely in the poorest countries, adding comparatively small additional pressure at the global level. Resource use is strongly correlated with income, however. Currently, per capita material and energy use in developed countries is higher than in developing countries by a factor of 5-10.

Trends and challenges

Global socioeconomic, demographic and environmental megatrends have increased interdependence among countries, but without any commensurate strengthening of global governance. As a result, global macroeconomic imbalances, migratory pressures and environmental challenges are insufficiently addressed, and crises occur with increasing frequency. At the same time, countries with growing exposure and interlinkages become more vulnerable to such external shocks, and crises spread more quickly, threatening development progress.

At the national and sub national levels, these tighter links have facilitated socioeconomic progress, but not everybody is benefiting to the same degree. Rather, inequalities both within and between countries persist. While growth has accelerated in many developing countries, often it has been non-inclusive, failing to create sufficient employment opportunities and exacerbating inequalities. The consolidation of value chains and the related deceleration of trade growth may render the implementation of export-based growth strategies even more difficult in the years ahead, at the same time as demographic developments make accelerated employment generation an imperative in countries with large youth cohorts.

Population dynamics will also impose additional stresses on local governments and rapidly growing cities and national health and education systems. Rapid ageing in numerous countries, in particular, will require further investments in social protection systems. The persistence of inequalities, whether in incomes, or in access to services, decent jobs, land or technology, also hints at their entrenched structural causes. Discrimination and exclusion, based on gender, age, disability or ethnicity, have to be tackled directly in order that greater inclusiveness and transformative change may be achieved. These challenges are exacerbated in multiple ways by accelerating environmental degradation. The poor are most vulnerable to environmental hazards and, owing to the unequal distribution of assets, will also suffer the most from resource scarcities. In terms of the medium and long run, threats to the stability of the global climate overshadow all other challenges, as they would fundamentally undermine the preconditions for human development.

How will the Sustainable Development Goals be implemented?

• The Addis Ababa Action Agenda that came out of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development provided concrete policies and actions to support the implementation of the new agenda.

• Implementation and success will rely on countries' own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes, and will be led by countries. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be a compass for aligning countries' plans with their global commitments.

• Nationally owned and country-led sustainable development strategies will require resource mobilization and financing strategies.

• All stakeholders: governments, civil society, the private sector, and others, are expected to contribute to the realisation of the new agenda.

• A revitalized global partnership at the global level is needed to support national efforts. This is recognized in the 2030 Agenda.

• Multi-stakeholder partnerships have been recognized as an important component of strategies that seek to mobilize all stakeholders around the new agenda.

Important aspects

- Transitioning to low carbon infrastructure: Investments in low-emission infrastructure will require an unprecedented transformation of our infrastructure system. Most existing energy and transport infrastructure was designed and built for a world of cheap and abundant fossil fuels, contributing to economic growth in many regions but also GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions. Choices made on infrastructure systems in the next decade will be critical for achieving net-zero objectives and halting the dramatic loss in biodiversity.

- Infrastructure investment is a means, not an end and requires a new systemic approach: Infrastructure investment has the potential to generate long-term benefits to society in terms of inclusive economic growth and improvements to wellbeing; it could contribute to key policy priorities, such as supporting the low-carbon transition, protecting biodiversity, making societies more resilient, addressing disparities across regions and cities, and promoting sustainable development

- Resilient infrastructure as an economic opportunity: Resilience is essential to absorb the impacts of adverse shocks and it creates a unique opportunity for countries to be ready against future risks as part of their recovery efforts.

- Infrastructure as providing a service to the Community: While serving as a key means to achieve sustainable development, infrastructure needs to consider changing community expectations, the increasing power of civil society and social connectivity, as well as potential new legal requirements, all of which add to the complexity of delivering infrastructure projects effectively.

Linkages with other SDGs

SDG 9 has interlinkages with many other Goals and targets, including industry-related targets associated with job creation, sustainable livelihoods and food security, for example.

- Linkages with SDG 3 (good health and well-being): Improved access to electricity, transportation and modern ICT provides significant health benefits through mhealth (mobile health) and e-health, which can empower community health workers to deliver better care at lower costs.

- Linkages with SDG 5 (gender equality): Poor infrastructure has the power to exacerbate the gender gap in many ways. For instance, compared to men, women tend to rely more on public transport, travel shorter distances, and travel more during off-peak hours. Unsafe and low security transports also put women at a disadvantage as they are more affected by violence and this vulnerability affects their well-being and their labour force participation. Therefore, Infrastructure has to be green but also gender inclusive. Providing access to clean energy and water would dramatically improve women's livelihood while protecting the environment.

- Linkages with SDG 11 (sustainable transport): The role of transport in sustainable development was first recognized at the 1992 United Nation's Earth Summit and reinforced in its outcome document – Agenda 21.The global attention to transport has continued in recent years. World leaders recognized unanimously at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development. Sustainable transportation can enhance economic growth and improve accessibility.

Questions the resolution should answer

1."Aid for development, is it the answer?"

The OECD defines aid as a voluntary transfer of wealth from one country to another with the aim of benefiting the recipient country. This, however, is not always the case, as many donors use aid as ways to benefit themselves either by favorably influencing the politics of a certain country, opening up market access

We need to measure both “inputs” (ie, did nation X invest what they said they were going to invest in addressing issues A, B, and C), as well as “outcomes” (ie, did we actually achieve our goals to eradicate poverty, improve health, and provide access to water, food and energy in nation X)?

However, crucially, we need powerful ways of feeding this information back into the policy and political arena to hold responsible stakeholders to account. This chiefly includes governments, but also other key stakeholders in the private sector, NGOs, and even civil society. If we don’t create these sorts of ‘feedback loops’ to hold each other to account, how will we make sure that the SDGs are actually being implemented? While aid flows into developing countries and LDCs, one might expect inflated growth in the economy.

The gap between the expected and actual growth can be traced back to corruption and private consumption. Corruption is widely spread in countries with low development conditions; however, quantifying it has proved to be elusive. Corruption continues to be a taboo subject; thus, the ability to separate corruption costs from wastage, mismanagement and inefficiency is impossible. This leads to more control clauses from the donor countries enforced upon recipients in order to limit these wastages. However, this leads to loss of flexibly to the recipient economy, as it has to deal with more constraints thus lowering the aid efficiency.

2.“One size fits all?”

It becomes evident that reaching a clear-cut solution whereby a recommendation can be issued to all countries seeking development is impossible. Certain methods seem to work in some cases, while causing extreme damages in other cases. This leads to the belief that every case needs its own recommendation based on its economic strengths, weaknesses and development status, to name a few economic indicators.

Direct implementation of an economic policy framework without taking into consideration the underlying social, political and economic structure led to a large duality among the society, i.e., large corporations ran by corrupt few elites and the remaining impoverished workers trying to survive with the effects of sudden globalization. In a recent G-20 meeting, the IMF was finally reformed to include and empower the developing countries’ voice and to overcome the “shock therapy” approach, which accompanies the loans along with the strict conditionalities. Will a similar WTO reform take place soon? Will the developing countries finally unite and take a final stand?

Further Readings -

http://unctad.org/en/Pages/Home.aspx
http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/devel_e/devel_e.htm
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