

BACKGROUND GUIDES



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Letter from the DIAS
- Introduction to the Committee

Agenda 1:

- Introduction to the Agenda
- Key Terms
- Key Issues
- Major Parties Involved
- Previous Attempts to Address the Issue
- Questions a Resolution Must Answer
- Bibliography

Agenda 2:

- Introduction to the Agenda
- Key Terms
- Key Issues
- Major Parties Involved
- Previous Attempts to Address the Issue
- Questions a Resolution Must Answer
- Bibliography

Letter from the DIAS

Dear Delegates,

We are honored to welcome you to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the Wesgreen International School Model United Nations 2026. It's an honor for us to be your chairs for this committee.

For this session, the panel will consist of Lara Ameen, Omar Elhoussaini, and Lynn Hassan, who will lead as chairs. We aim to create an environment where we encourage all delegates to engage in the debate, to express themselves, and to ensure that insightful discussions continue throughout the session. We encourage you to consider that this might not just be a great opportunity to grow personally and professionally but also challenge yourselves as much as you can, regardless of the amount of Model United Nations experience you may have.

This year, our focus will be on the ongoing issues of "The Geopolitical and Economic Effects of AI on Global Employment and Social Development." and "The Rise of Human Trafficking Networks and Modern Slavery As a Major Transnational Threat to Security and Development.". The global systems are getting transformed entirely, and in the process, countries have to deal with the negative aspects of globalization, such as job cut-offs, inequities, and lack of regulation. Meanwhile, the issue of human trafficking and modern slavery is getting bigger and more complicated with transnational and high-organized crime involvement, digital exploitation, and lack of enforcement across borders as the main contributing factors. Such networks not only violate human rights but also create and spread insecurity in communities and complicate the process of development across the globe. As members of ECOSOC, you have the difficult task of coordinating the advancement of technology with social protection and at the same time deepening international cooperation, victim-oriented responses, and preventive measures against exploitation. We look forward to informative discussions on the legal, ethical, and developmental aspects of these matters, as well as the ways that will support human rights and sustainable development.

We invite you to come well prepared, ready to participate in debates and to enjoy the character of argumentation and debate. If you have any questions or need assistance closer to the event, please feel free to contact us. We eagerly await you and we look forward to leading your committee this year.

Best regards,

Lara Ameen

Omar Elhoussaini

Lynn Hassan

Introduction to committee

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Established in 1945, it seeks to promote sustainable development across a plethora of relevant fields with goals applicable to any Member State, from improved living conditions to increasingly subtle social developments. By encouraging discussions and debates on policy, coordinating activities and expectations from many different UN Agencies and promoting a connection with willing non-governmental organizations, the council seeks to empower practical solutions to increasingly complex developments.

The Council is made up of 54 Member States elected from the General Assembly. These Member States are diverse enough in their levels of economic skill, political systems and regional interests that an alliance with such diverse capabilities is best suited to address relevant issues through collaboration and agreement, and could engage solutions that otherwise would not be found. Unlike other committees and bodies dealing with security or diplomacy, this committee is more focused on how international relations impact everyday citizens with respect to jobs, education, and social welfare.

Thus, delegates must understand both their privileges and limitations given to them on this council based on discussions and suggested projects, either coming to realization or hesitation based on the unique, case-by-case factors of each situation. When developed countries suggest certain actions, those countries with developing situations are forced to believe the intentions yet question whether it's realistic. A strong delegate will rely upon national standards operating within the international arena to ensure the best solutions possible but recognize when certain actions are not universally applicable. Effective resolutions must be compromise-based and assessed in agreement with what the United Nations at large seeks to uphold.

Agenda 1: Addressing the Geopolitical and Economic Effects of AI on Global Employment and Social Development.

Introduction to the Agenda

The first topic, Addressing the Geopolitical and Economic Effects of AI on Global Employment and Social Development, gives delegates the opportunity to explore the rapidly changing world of technology and economic development and how AI can change perceptions on employment options, economic growth, strategic competition and inequality in an increasingly digital society. While many countries seek to exploit AI and digital creation, they're simultaneously finding job losses at unexpected levels, creating a new series of inequality challenges not only within countries but across developed and developing nations. Therefore, when addressing the global impact of AI on employment and social development, delegates should question how nation states and international institutions can protect and promote structural social development through AI while ensuring there's respect for workers' rights to maintain jobs and necessary technological access.

The uneven pace of AI adoption has widened gaps in digital infrastructure, education, and workforce readiness, particularly in low and middle income countries. Without thorough policy responses, automation risks affecting vulnerable populations, including low-skilled workers, women, and informal sector employees. At the same time, AI presents opportunities for job creation, increased productivity, and improved public services if supported by effective governance and inclusive investment strategies. International cooperation will be essential in developing regulatory frameworks, ethical standards, and capacity-building initiatives that ensure ethical access to AI technologies. By balancing innovation with social responsibility, governments and global institutions can help ensure that AI-driven economic transformation supports long-term social development rather than deepening existing inequalities.

Introduction to the Agenda

Technological change has long reshaped global employment patterns, from the Industrial Revolution to the rise of computers and the internet in the late 20th century. Each wave of innovation brought productivity gains alongside labor displacement, often requiring new education systems and social protections to mitigate inequality. Artificial intelligence represents a more rapid and far-reaching shift, as its ability to automate not only manual labor but also cognitive and analytical tasks marks a significant departure from previous technological transitions, raising new concerns about job security, skills gaps, and long-term social development.

Today, AI technologies are being integrated across sectors such as manufacturing, finance, healthcare, and public administration, accelerating economic growth in some regions while exacerbating employment uncertainty in others. High-income countries and multinational corporations are leading AI development, while many developing nations face limited access to digital infrastructure, data, and skilled labor. As automation advances, workers in routine and low-skill occupations are at heightened risk of displacement, making reskilling, social safety nets, and inclusive digital policies increasingly urgent at both national and international levels.

The United Nations has begun addressing the intersection of technology, employment, and development through initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goals 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Agencies including the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNDP, and UNESCO have released reports and guidelines on the future of work, ethical AI, and digital inclusion, emphasizing human-centered approaches to technological governance. However, while these frameworks provide important foundations, they remain largely non-binding, highlighting the need for stronger coordination and policy development within ECOSOC to address AI's growing socioeconomic impact.

Key Terms

Artificial intelligence (AI): A technology displaying the capacity of computers to simulate and exhibit human intelligence.

Global Employment: (the employment-to-population ratio): is a statistical ratio that measures the proportion of a country's working age population that is employed and the total labor force and job market across all economic sectors and regions worldwide.

Labour displacement: The phasing out or reshaping of occupations because of technology, namely automation and AI.

Reskilling and Upskilling: The provision of training to workers in acquiring new skills or improving existing ones, in response to changing labor market demand.

The digital divide: The term digital divide relates to the gap between those people who are able to access modern technology and those with restricted access.

Social development: Ensuring everyone has access to public services, jobs and a voice that is heard. It means seeing a means to human rights, a means to be important in society and having a sense of trust, self esteem and confidence.

Key Issues

Unemployment and Displacement of Jobs: The estimated effect of AI will be experienced by a substantial number of jobs globally; this will result in AI affecting the job market by applying AI to automate processes and decrease the need for labor in some job markets. Countries with more developed economies will have higher levels of vulnerability because of job susceptibility to AI automation, and low-income countries will have different levels of AI impact, this will result in limited job security for employees globally if not addressed.

Digital infrastructure and skills divide: Unequal adoption and readiness for AI technology which is highlighting a digital divide that is influencing many social development outcomes. Many countries lack the sufficient digital infrastructure, computing power, and workforce expertise that are crucial to be able to utilize AI's full potential.

Social Development, Human Capabilities: The effects of AI are not limited to work, it also affects social development outcomes, such as education and health. Even if there is a possibility of development towards making AI useful and able to accelerate development tasks, it may impede such advancement because of unequal accessibility, bias, inequality, or discriminatory systems. If AI is improperly implemented without safeguards, it may also perpetuate inequality, ignore the rural population, or deprive humans of their agency in decision-making.

Key Issues

Policy and Governance Issues: In order to mitigate the economical and social impacts caused by AI, there is a need for effective governmental interventions and strategies at the global level so as to be capable of facing the challenges and risks posed by AI. This is because AI has developed at a much faster pace than the regulatory system in most countries, which has reduced the need for joint actions in relation to the transition of the workforce and ethical management.

Widening inequality between countries: Due to the unequal access of technology, skills, infrastructure, and governance capacity, AI has the ability of worsening inequality between countries, by reversing decades worth of progress in closing development gaps, where countries with strong digital readiness, AI investments, and well developed regulatory frameworks are set to capture and benefit from the majority of AI's economic gains, while poorer countries and vulnerable groups with inadequate infrastructure, lower educational capacity, and technology barriers fall further and further behind.

Major Parties

The United States: The United States is among the principal causes making AI a globally accepted phenomenon. Its technology firms are influencing the global job market to a great extent. Besides, it still ranks high among the countries with the largest number of trafficking victims and thus, is deeply involved in both tech development and protection of vulnerable groups.

China: The AI boost in China is skyrocketing and it's impacting the world's supply chains in an intelligent way, giving rise to concerns about job losses. However, it still has to deal with the accusations about the use of forced labor and human rights violations, which puts it right in the middle of two debates: AI's economic impact and human rights.

India: The huge Indian labor force makes automation very helpful in its economy. The introduction of AI could greatly enhance the economy but at the same time would lead to the loss of jobs for millions. Moreover, India is dealing with problems with trafficking, mainly of women and children, which makes it a country that is in need of development and protection.

European Union: The European Union through its rigorous regulations is the major force behind the establishment of almost all the digital rules worldwide. However, it is also fighting against the trafficking networks that take advantage of the open borders and migration routes. The EU's policies determine both the standards of technology and the extent of security for humans.

The United Kingdom: The UK is making efforts to be seen as a leader in AI governance. Naturally, the rising number of trafficking cases, which are related to irregular immigration, is of great concern to the country as it is already heavily involved in both the future of work and transnational crime prevention.

Japan: The country is faced with a shrinking labor force as a result of the demographic shift and thus relies very much on tech and AI to fill this gap. It also observes trafficking in foreign labor, particularly in the sectors that require a lot of hands. Thus, it has an interest in both the ethical use of technology and in the protection of workers rights.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

As nations continue to adapt towards the rise of AI, there has been much focus on how it will impact jobs and economies across the globe:

In 2019, OECD announced its AI laws for all nations to help them use AI safely and highlight problems with jobs by AI.

In 2021, UNESCO applied its recommendations on the Ethics of AI which asked the governments of nations to think of national strategies for the protection of workers and making sure AI is used in an ethical way.

The ILO has done research on the impact automation will have on the different types of jobs that might be affected by it and especially in developing countries.

Discussions among the G20 and World Economic Forum regarding creating a set of global AI standards and methods for the adaptation of national labour markets have brought national attention to this issue, however they produced no globally accepted framework.

Most are voluntary guidelines with none providing consistency among countries, resulting in many gaps in addressing the effects of AI globally on both economic and social systems.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- In what way could governments strike a balance between the fast progress of AI and the requirement of helping workers from losing their jobs and facing economic insecurity?
- What functions should International organizations carry out to help countries that are in need of resources to adjust their labor markets so that they become AI compliant?
- If big tech companies use AI to cut thousands of jobs, how do we force them to deal with the economic mess they cause? How do they pay for the social damage?
- What methods can rich and poor governments do to make AI accessible to anyone, and not just the rich?
- What are the measures that should be focused on to make sure AI contributes to social development and not only on undermining workers rights.

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Agenda 2: Addressing the rise of human trafficking networks and modern slavery as a major transnational threat to security and development.

Introduction to the Agenda

The second topic, Addressing the Rise of Human Trafficking Networks and Modern Slavery as a Major Transnational Threat to Security and Development originates one of humanity's oldest crimes that still exists to date as a silent crisis across countries. Where international human trafficking becomes a crime against humanity that not only violates economic development through underground means, but it fuels organized crime, dehumanizes people's dignity, and becomes a major transnational threat to security and development. As such, this topic allows delegates to assess these social and economic openings which enables networking as well as evaluate the international approach taken thus far. The ideal solution for security is preventing crime from occurring in the first place, however this relies upon networks for a new system of cooperation with law enforcement initiatives to provide better prevention, recognition and protection.

Human trafficking networks increasingly exploit globalization, migration, and digital technologies to expand their reach and evade detection by national authorities. Conflict, poverty, political instability, and lack of economic opportunity continue to act as key drivers that make individuals and communities more vulnerable to exploitation. Addressing modern slavery therefore requires a comprehensive approach that combines law enforcement, cooperation with social protection, victim-centered policies, and long-term development strategies. Strengthening cross-border intelligence sharing, harmonizing legal frameworks, and improving data collection are essential to dismantling trafficking networks effectively. By prioritizing prevention, survivor rehabilitation, and accountability, the international community can reduce the prevalence of human trafficking while reinforcing global security and human rights protections.

Introduction to the Agenda

Human trafficking and forms of modern slavery have existed for centuries, evolving alongside global economic systems, migration patterns, and conflict dynamics. While traditional forms of slavery were formally abolished through international conventions in the 19th and 20th centuries, exploitative practices persisted and adapted, particularly through forced labor, sexual exploitation, debt bondage, and child exploitation. As globalization expanded trade and mobility, trafficking networks increasingly operated across borders, transforming an age-old crime into a complex transnational challenge requiring coordinated international responses.

In the present day, human trafficking affects millions worldwide, with victims originating from and exploited in nearly every region. Traffickers leverage irregular migration routes, online recruitment platforms, and weak governance structures to conceal their activities and maximize profits. Vulnerable populations—such as migrants, refugees, women, children, and those in informal labor markets—are disproportionately targeted. Despite growing awareness, underreporting remains a major obstacle, and many countries lack the resources or institutional capacity to effectively identify victims, prosecute perpetrators, and disrupt trafficking networks.

The United Nations has taken significant steps to combat human trafficking, most notably through the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) under the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. UN agencies such as UNODC, ILO, UNICEF, and IOM have supported member states through technical assistance, data collection, and victim protection frameworks. Additionally, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits the international community to eradicating forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking; However, implementation gaps and enforcement challenges persist, underscoring the need for strengthened global cooperation and policy alignment.

Key Terms

Modern slavery: Modern slavery refers to situations of exploitation in which a person is unable to refuse or leave and they're manipulated by others, through physical or financial means, this is done to gain a profit by exploiting their vulnerabilities.

Transnational crime: Transnational crimes are violations of law that operate across borders involving more than one country, exploiting vulnerable people and undermining global security.

Organized Criminal Networks: Organized criminal networks are structured groups that operate continuously to commit serious crimes for financial gain, which involves illegal activities like human trafficking, weapon trafficking and money laundering. This is often done across borders using corruption or violence, and adapting ways to control illicit markets.

Victim-Centered Approach: Acts as a way to connect with victims that prioritizes listening, avoids re-traumatization and focuses on their safety, rights, expressed needs and choices; its primary objective is to give back as much control to victims as possible and ensure an empathetic way of delivery of continuous reliable services in a non judgmental and non discriminatory manner.

Labour Exploitation: The mental and physical abuse of workers through unfair wages/salaries and even hazardous work conditions. For example: extreme work hours, salaries that are below legal standards and even unsafe environments in work.

Key Issues

Destabilizing of societies: Human trafficking poses a serious challenge to societies, it hurts the security and development of societies by breaking the unity of people. Human trafficking also contributes to corruption. It redirects resources from economic growth, delaying development. Making it difficult for societies to grow, which also weakens the power of the state. Makes people feel less safe especially in areas that are already weak and vulnerable. In these areas criminal groups can do what they want. The money from trafficking causes people to miss out on good economic opportunities and makes poverty worse. This makes societies more unstable.

Funding criminal and terrorist organizations: Human trafficking and modern slavery generate large profits; these funds enable criminal and terrorist organizations to continue operating, which threatens global safety. Transnational organized crime networks make money from trafficking, bringing in billions of dollars every year. These funds contribute to making crime networks stronger and more powerful, allowing them to expand their reach and influence. Some terrorist groups also use trafficking as a way of recruitment to control more populations and territories. All of this makes the government and laws weaker in the areas where they're active.

Key Issues

Market distortion: Modern slavery is an issue because it gives certain businesses an unfair advantage. Modern slavery occurs when businesses use forced labor to cut costs by not paying workers the minimum wage and by disregarding safety regulations, violating rules that were put in place to protect workers. Companies that force people to work against their will or exploit Labour can sell products at very low prices, which widens the gap between the rich and the poor. This makes it even harder for workers, migrant workers and women to earn a living, and it also hurts the communities in which they live in.

Undercounting and victim identification issues: Many victims remain hidden due to fear of consequences instilled in them by their perpetrators, their lack of trust in authorities, and inadequate identification systems, leading to underreporting and minimizes effective responses, and without reliable data and robust victim support frameworks, efforts to protect victims and prosecute traffickers are weakened, which allows exploitation to continue and minimizes the effectiveness of policy interventions.

Major Parties

South Korea: South Korea's technology is expanding at a really fast rate, and its potential to make a significant impact on the job market. As an emerging AI superpower, South Korea must deal with the problems of migratory workers and organise their laws to handle the majority of workers in the Fishing and Manufacturing industries.

United Arab Emirates: The United Arab Emirates is becoming a central area for AI development and is investing heavily into digital technology. Due to the growing number of work permits offered by the UAE Government to non-citizens, there will be a large number of people at risk of being trafficked throughout the region.

Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia is starting to implement AI and automation in the context of the Vision 2030 Reforms, and continues to deal with the ongoing issue of migratory worker exploitation, which in turn puts the country in both the ethical technology and human rights conversations.

Nigeria: Nigeria is a country where human trafficking networks has substantial influence. From an economic point of view, Nigeria is going to be highly influenced by the increase in global automation. AI is both a risk and an opportunity for the country.

Mexico: Mexico is located in an area that is very supportive of the trafficking trade. However, as Mexico attempts to include AI into its economy and manufacturing sector, Mexico's location is also supporting both economic and security aspects of AI development.

Turkey: Turkey is located in a way that supports the use of human trafficking routes. Still, with Turkey's current digital reform focus, Turkey is changing how it conducts economic activities through business reform and digital transformation.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

The Palermo Protocol in the year 2000, was the first major international effort to combat human trafficking.

To support these efforts, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) developed training programs, established several international projects, published numerous reports on human trafficking, and provided government agencies with various forms of technical assistance.

In 2010, the UN also published a Global Plan of Action aimed at preventing human trafficking.

Through proper education and increasing international cooperation with different countries In addition to these efforts by Regional organizations, Regional organisations like those in the E.U. Continue to take action through comprehensive plans that include border security enhancement or creating a mechanism for sharing information and targeting organised crime groups across borders.

Internationally, INTERPOL has facilitated a number of international operations aimed at eliminating trafficking illicit networks.

Even with these initiatives there has been a tremendous increase in the volume of trafficking due to the vast amount of organised crime that continues to operate across borders and exploit people through the internet and all levels of law enforcement who are compromised and incapable of stopping this crime.

Because of all these things, the International Community has not adequately addressed the issue of trafficking threats.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- In what ways can we initiate cross-border sharing of information between intelligence and law enforcement agencies that leads to real coordination of their operations and not only transcripts exchange? What precise measures create genuine trust among these groups?
- What are the ways through which we can guarantee that the standard of care and support for the survivors of trafficking their rescue, recovery, and reintegration will be good everywhere in the world?
- Why does human trafficking still continue to increase even though there are international laws that exist that are supposed to stop them?
- How can countries with terrible legal systems and countries that don't care be supported in enforcing anti human trafficking laws?
- In what way should technology be used in combating trafficking, while stopping it being misused by criminal networks?

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