Silver Oaks Model United Nations
7th Edition

BACKGROUND GUIDE

ECOSOC

AGENDA: THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL NARRATIVES AND THEIR SOCIAL-ECONOMIC IMPACT IN DEVELOPING STATES

Table of Contents

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 7th Edition of Silver Oaks Model United Nations! It is both a privilege and a pleasure to introduce you to our committee, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). As your Executive Board, we are here not only to guide the flow of debate but also to ensure that your MUN experience is intellectually stimulating, collaborative, and memorable.

This Background Guide has been carefully prepared with one clear purpose: to serve as a foundation for your research and a roadmap to help you navigate the committee. It provides context on the mandate and functioning of ECOSOC, as well as an introduction to this year's agenda. However, we want to emphasize that this guide is not meant to confine your ideas or limit your scope. Think of it as a starting point, an invitation to dig deeper, explore multiple perspectives, and form your own unique strategies as delegates.

The agenda for this year, "The Influence of Social Media on Political Narratives and Their Socio-Economic Impact in Developing States", reflects one of the most urgent and underexplored challenges of our time. Social media today is no longer just a platform for connection; it has evolved into an economic system, a political instrument, and a powerful force shaping societies. With this, opportunities and risks walk hand in hand, making it a timely subject for ECOSOC's deliberation.

We understand that MUN can sometimes feel overwhelming, especially for first-time participants. But remember: what matters most to us is not how eloquent or seasoned you may be. What truly matters is your ability to think critically, respect differing perspectives, represent your assigned nation with integrity, and work towards building consensus without compromising on principle. Debate here is not about competition, it's about collaboration, problem-solving, and growing together as diplomats and global citizens.

As your EB, we encourage you to approach the discussions with both creativity and pragmatism. Ground your arguments in research, back your policies with credible international frameworks, and don't hesitate to innovate when addressing gaps in existing systems. Above all, allow yourself to be curious, open-minded, and bold enough to challenge the status quo when needed.

We are genuinely excited to see the perspectives you bring to the table, the alliances you build, and the solutions you shape. This conference is not just about resolutions, it's about learning, exchanging ideas, and discovering the diplomat within you.

Wishing you all the very best as you embark on this journey. Let's make this committee a space for meaningful debate, impactful collaboration, and lasting memories.

Warm regards,

Chaitanya Palem - Co-Chairperson

Sreesai K. Juttiga - Co-Chairperson

Soham Mohanty - Vice Chair

Shaurya Agrawal – Rapporteur

POSITION PAPERS

For the 7th Edition of SOMUN, the ECOSOC Committee will be accepting the submission of position papers. The Executive Board *strongly encourages* you to make a position paper with respect to your assigned country.

Keeping the newer delegates in mind, we have added this section to give you a glimpse on what an ideal position paper consists of and how you are expected to present it. If you have any further queries regarding this, please feel free to reach out to us.

WHAT IS A POSITION PAPER?

A position paper is typically a one-page document which present's your country's stance on the agenda your committee will be discussing. A solid position paper comprises of three parts:

1) Your Country's position on the Agenda
2) Your Country's relation to the Agenda
3) Your Country's proposal towards the Agenda.

IMPORTANCE OF THE POSITION PAPER

We believe that this opportunity of presenting a position papers can help delegates to initiate a basic level of research before the conference. Understanding why a Position Paper is important as it lays the foundation to help you sort your thoughts as well as delivering your desired message to the Executive Board.

GUIDELINES

SOMUN has set standards for the format of position papers. Position papers submitted for NMUN should adhere to the following:

- Length must not exceed two pages; any position papers over two pages will have only the first two pages considered.
- Font: Times New Roman
  Size: 12
- Justify the text of your paragraphs so both the right and left sides have straight edges.
- On the first line of the first page, type **Country:** [FULL COUNTRY NAME]
- On the second line of the first page, type **Committee:** The Economic and Social Council
- Example header on the first page:

Country: United Mexican States
Committee: The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- Include a short introductory paragraph at the beginning of your position paper that introduces the topic on your committee's agenda and your Member State's or Observer's commitment to addressing these topics.
- For the remainder of the paper, address the topic before your committee. Name the agenda and make sure it is ***bolded and italicised*** and aligned in the centre

Example topic title:

The Influence of Social Media on Political Narratives and their Socio-Economic Impact in Developing States.

- Address the global/regional context of the topic (including relevant statistics and information); what the international/regional community and your Member State or Observer have previously done to address the topic; and provide both broad and specific actions that your committee and the international community can take to address the topic going forward (while also acting in line with your Member State's or Observer's positions and policies).
- Submit your position paper in PDF format only. **Submissions in any other format will be rejected on the spot** and the delegate will be prompted to resubmit in the correct format, aligning with the guidelines.
- Unlike in most academic papers, you should not include citations in your position paper. This is because the position paper is written as though it is a policy statement from a foreign ministry. Accordingly, please avoid using footnotes, endnotes, or in-text parenthetical citations in your position paper. Although formal citations are not used, quotation marks should still appear around direct quotes and informal acknowledgement of any sources quoted is expected.

SAMPLE POSITION PAPER

To get more clarity on the formatting of Position Papers, you can click here to get redirected to a pdf document which is a sample version of a position paper.

All the content given in this document is purely represented as a sample for representational purposes for the delegates to understand the formatting.

OVERVIEW OF ECOSOC

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is an important part of the United Nations with responsibility for interfacing economic and social matters. It was created in 1945 as one of the six principal organs of the UN.[1] Its major responsibility is the promotion of deliberation, encouragement of consensus, and coordination of action leading to commonly shared objectives. ECOSOC functions as a central forum of international attention to economic and social problems, offering policy suggestions to member states. Currently, It has 53 member states (A vacancy is yet to be voted on between North Macedonia and Russia)[2] and works with around 6,500 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), whose affiliations are reviewed and updated periodically.[3]

MANDATE OF ECOSOC

At the 2005 World Summit, paragraph 155 of the World Summit Outcome Document mandated ECOSOC to ensure follow-up on the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits, including internationally agreed development goals. It was also tasked with holding annual ministerial-level substantive reviews (AMRs) to assess progress, drawing on its functional and regional commissions, as well as other international institutions, in line with their mandates.[4]

STRENGTHENING OF ECOSOC

Following the World Summit, the General Assembly adopted resolution 61/16 on the "Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council." The resolution decided that AMRs would:

- be held as part of ECOSOC's high-level segment;
- be conducted by a cross-sectoral approach focusing on thematic issues common to the outcomes of major conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally agreed development goals (IADGs);
- review progress made in the implementation of the outcomes of such conferences and summits; and
- assess their impact on the achievement of goals and targets.[5]

The General Assembly further recommended voluntary national presentations, encouraged contributions from functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies, called for a multi-year programme of work for AMRs, and invited organizations within the UN system (including the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO) to contribute within their mandates. It also requested regional commissions to collaborate with other organizations to review and provide input on progress made in implementing summit outcomes.

[1] United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, Chapter X, art. 61.
[2] "Members | Economic and Social Council," n.d., https://ecosoc.un.org/en/about-us/members.
[3] United Nations Economic and Social Council, "About ECOSOC," UN.org, accessed September 25, 2025, https://ecosoc.un.org/en/about-us.
[4] United Nations, *2005 World Summit Outcome Document*, A/RES/60/1 (24 October 2005), para. 155.
[5] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 61/16: Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*, A/RES/61/16 (20 November 2006).

AGENDA OVERVIEW

AGENDA:

The Influence of Social Media on Political Narratives and Their Socio-Economic Impact in Developing States

The social media economies have become significant elements of developing nations' political economy as they serve as dynamic influence, ideas, and capital markets. They act as online public discourse infrastructures and commerce-based models to generate income. The proliferation of social media in developing nations results largely from the availability of low-cost mobile data and high levels of smartphone penetration, making these platforms central to economic and political competition as well as constructive dialogue.[6]

The core feature of these economies is harvesting, monetizing, and in many cases, reselling user data to advertisers and political parties. This leads to a system where political discourse is commodified and governed by engagement-driven algorithms that frequently amplify divisive or sensationalized narratives.[7] Political campaigns now operate like economic businesses, purchasing advertising space, hiring digital staff, and contracting firms to purchase online attention.

The influence of social media economies on elections is particularly significant, as elections increasingly rely on sponsored posts, paid ads, and influencer collaborations to engage voters. The business models of these platforms allow political operatives to use microtargeting, creating highly specific messages for particular communities. This provides well-financed parties and candidates with disproportionate advantages over smaller competitors.[8]

Social media profoundly shapes how political narratives emerge, with viral hashtags and trends often taking precedence over substantive public debate. At times, platforms have been employed to spread disinformation on a massive scale, while in other instances, they have amplified populist messaging or content that fuels polarization.[9]

Employment within this ecosystem is equally important. Many developing countries have witnessed political parties employing young workers to run "IT cells," troll farms, and meme factories. Elections thus generate new forms of precarious digital labor, directly tying political contention to unstable economic models.[10] More broadly, social media economies redefine socio-economic relationships. Advertising revenues are often captured by large technology corporations headquartered in the Global North, creating what scholars call a form of "digital colonialism."[11] Inequalities deepen as rural communities, women, and marginalized groups often remain excluded from digital economy benefits. Moreover, governments that rely heavily on social media for

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[6] Michael J. Jensen, "The Mobile Internet in Developing Countries: Patterns of Use and Socio-Economic Implications," *Information Technologies & International Development* 9, no. 2 (2013): 43–50.
[7] Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019), 211–15.
[8] Philip N. Howard and Samuel Woolley, *Computational Propaganda: Political Parties, Politicians, and Political Manipulation on Social Media* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 45–49.
[9] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Journalism, Fake News & Disinformation: Handbook for Journalism Education and Training* (Paris: UNESCO, 2018), 34–36.
[10] Ruchi Sharma, "Digital Labour in India's Elections: IT Cells, Meme Factories and Online Campaigning," *Economic & Political Weekly* 55, no. 45 (2020): 12–15.
[11] Michael Kwet, "Digital Colonialism: US Empire and the New Imperialism in the Global South," *Race & Class* 60, no. 4 (2019): 3–26.

electoral campaigns show little inclination to regulate platforms, thereby allowing them to accumulate unchecked economic and political influence.[12]

HISTORICAL ASPECTS

FOUNDATIONS AND EARLY POLICY FRAME

In the late 1990s and early 2000s political communication in many developing states grew through email lists, bulletin boards, and SMS broadcast trees that ran out of internet cafés and phone kiosks. These places doubled as civic hubs where operators curated messages and grew contact books. Parties and movements learned forward-first habits that treated redistribution of messages as a public duty. These habits created a cultural baseline for later social platforms where forwarding, sharing, and joining groups felt normal rather than novel.[13]

At the same time, the United Nations placed connectivity and rights into a development frame. The World Summit on the Information Society produced the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action in 2003 and the Tunis Commitment and Tunis Agenda in 2005. These outcomes tied access, media pluralism, and human rights to socio-economic development, which is the same linkage your agenda interrogates when it asks how online narrative power affects growth, jobs, and inclusion. WSIS established the idea that information architecture is economic architecture, not just technology.[14]

Early social networks in the mid-2000s turned online space into a visible arena for persuasion. Parties experimented with groups, events, and page-based organizing, but ad markets and payments were thin. Even so, campaign teams discovered that online conversations could set television talking points and radio phone-ins. This was the first shift toward platformized influence, where visibility and agenda setting were increasingly decided inside private companies rather than only in newsrooms or community halls.[15]

FROM CONNECTIVITY TO PLATFORMIZED POLITICS

Around 2010 smartphones and 3G to 4G coverage moved video and images into daily political talk. African adoption accelerated as vendors localized devices for low-light photography and dual-SIM norms, which expanded vernacular content creation beyond capitals. The socio-economic effect was immediate. New creator labor markets appeared, ad budgets began to follow attention, and political storytelling adapted to visual formats that were cheap to produce and easy to share on slow networks.[16]

Pricing shaped the on-ramp. Zero-rating and social bundles made selected apps free or very cheap, which trained first-time users to see the internet inside a few platforms. In February 2016 India's

[12] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), *Digital Economy Report 2021: Cross-border Data Flows and Development* (Geneva: UNCTAD, 2021), 67–70.
[13] International Telecommunication Union, *WSIS Outcome Documents: Geneva 2003–Tunis 2005* (Geneva: ITU, 2005).
[14] Ibid.; see also United Nations General Assembly, *Outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society*(A/RES/60/252, 2006) for follow-up framing.
[15] Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, *Digital News Report* series, contextual chapters on developing markets; triangulated with regional media histories.
[16] GSMA Intelligence, *The Mobile Economy Sub-Saharan Africa 2024* (London: GSMA, 2024).

telecom regulator prohibited discriminatory tariffs for data services, effectively blocking Free Basics style zero-rating and nudging operators back toward open pricing.

That policy change influenced who could pay to speak, which narratives could reach beyond walled gardens, and whether local publishers could compete for attention on a more neutral network.[17]

A significant shift in market pricing followed as Reliance Jio entered commercially in September 2016 with free introductory data and very low prices. Within a year, daily streaming and always-on messaging became routine for millions of first-time users. Campaigns and agencies pivoted from text-led formats to short video and live programming.[18] The business logic of attention hardened. Platforms priced visibility by predicted watch time and interaction, which meant narratives that triggered fast emotion and identity cues spread farther and cheaper than cautious policy explainers.[19]

MESSAGING VIRALITY, CRISES, AND NARRATIVE CAPTURE

Between 2014 and 2018 encrypted messaging scaled into national mass media during elections and crises. Large groups and broadcast lists allowed fabricated narratives to travel across districts in hours. The most visible warning came in 2017 and 2018 in India, when child-abduction rumors spread through messaging groups and were followed by lynchings.[20] These events showed how identity-charged claims can jump from feeds to streets faster than official information can catch up, and they highlighted the socio-economic toll on local businesses, schools, and public services when fear spikes and mobility drops.[21]

Platforms introduced staged product responses that matter directly to your agenda. In 2018. Messaging forwards were locally capped in India in January 2019; a global cap of five chats per forward arrived.[22] In August 2019, a "frequently forwarded" label warned users about virality, and in August 2020, an in-app search tool attempted to route users to verification. [23]These frictions slowed velocity without breaking encryption, which bought time for public interest information to compete, but they did not change the underlying economic incentive to produce high-engagement political content.

During pandemic lockdowns in 2020 governments and opposition figures adopted daily live briefings and short explainers. Citizens learned to expect direct Q and A in comments and to judge competence through the cadence of online communication.[24] This cemented a political economy in which creators, agencies, and platform tools act as the real distribution infrastructure for governance talk, not only for campaigns. The result is a continuous market for attention where political narratives compete with entertainment, and where creator livelihoods rise and fall with the same metrics that decide public information reach.[25]

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[17] Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, *Prohibition of Discriminatory Tariffs for Data Services Regulations, 2016*(New Delhi: TRAI, February 8, 2016).
[18] Reliance Jio, "Launch of Digital Services. Jio Welcome Offer effective from 5 September 2016," Media Release, September 1, 2016.
[19] "Mukesh Ambani ushers in telecom revolution," *The Economic Times*, September 2, 2016.
[20] Rina Chandran, "When a text can trigger a lynching," *Reuters*, June 25, 2018.
[21] "Mobs are killing people in India based on false rumors," *PBS NewsHour*, July 15, 2018.
[22] WhatsApp, "More changes to forwarding," Company blog, July 19, 2018.
[23] Joshua Benton, "WhatsApp limits message forwarding," *Nieman Lab*, January 22, 2019.
[24] Alex Hern, "WhatsApp launches fact-check feature aimed at viral messages," *The Guardian*, August 4, 2020.
[25] Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, *Navigating the 'Infodemic'* (Oxford: RISJ, April 2020).

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE AND THE CURRENT BASELINE

From 2019 onward UN system guidance began to align governance tools with fundamental rights. The United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech set a prevention and response approach for institutions.[26] In 2022 the Special Rapporteur (who operates in the Human Rights Council) on freedom of opinion and expression warned that counter-disinformation measures must comply with international human rights law and avoid criminalizing speech that should be addressed through transparency and due process. In 2023 the Secretary-General's Policy Brief on information integrity called for ad transparency, recommender disclosures, researcher access, and systemic-risk audits that scale with platform size.[27] In the same year UNESCO issued Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms after a large global consultation, clarifying the roles of states, platforms, civil society, and media. Together with ITU's WSIS legacy and measurement work on connectivity gaps, this forms the normative baseline that directly anchors your committee's socio-economic concerns.[28]

By the mid-2020s a stable pattern defines the agenda. Discovery runs through short-video feeds, mobilization runs through encrypted groups, and creators serve as the primary source of credibility. Value flows to a few multinational platforms and a thin creator elite, while online political engagement scales up around elections. Local newsrooms struggle to capture ad revenue, taxation and competition rules lag cross-border ad markets, and language gaps in moderation raise the cost of participation for rural and minority communities. This is the historical background to your agenda's core question.[29] Political narratives are being produced and priced inside social media economies, and the distribution of economic gains from that attention shapes who is heard, who is paid, and which communities are left out.

[26] United Nations, *United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech* (New York: UN, 2019).
[27] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, A/77/288* (Geneva: OHCHR, August 12, 2022).
[28] United Nations, *Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 8, Information Integrity on Digital Platforms* (New York: Executive Office of the Secretary-General, 2023).
[29] UNESCO, *Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2023).

PAST ACTIONS AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

UN SYSTEM GUIDANCE THAT ANCHORS RIGHTS, SAFETY, AND TRANSPARENCY

Across the last two decades, UN instruments have moved the conversation from simple access to accountable, rights-respecting governance of digital spaces. The World Summit on the Information Society set an early baseline by linking connectivity, media pluralism, and human rights to development, which is the same linkage your agenda evaluates when it asks how online narrative power affects socio-economic outcomes.[30] In 2019 the United Nations adopted a Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech to guide prevention, early warning, and institutional response, while keeping international human rights law at the center.[31] Building on this, the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression warned in 2022 that counter-disinformation policies risk unlawful speech restrictions unless they are necessary, proportionate, and subject to due process.[32] In 2023 the Secretary-General's Policy Brief on information integrity called for platform-level risk assessments, researcher access, ad-transparency norms, and recommender disclosures that scale with platform size, all while safeguarding free expression.[33] In parallel, UNESCO issued the Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms after a large, multi-stakeholder consultation to clarify the roles of states, platforms, civil society, media, and researchers; these Guidelines have become a common reference for lawmakers in developing states.[34] Together, these instruments supply a normative spine for committees weighing speech, safety, and the socio-economic distribution of attention.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DATA PROTECTION AND INTERMEDIARY REGIMES

Regional frameworks now shape domestic law across the Global South. The African Union's Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (the Malabo Convention) was adopted in 2014 and entered into force in 2023, giving the continent a binding baseline on personal data and cybersecurity that several states are transposing into national statutes.[35] Brazil's General Data Protection Law (LGPD) took effect in 2020, created an independent data authority, and established comprehensive rights that bind political actors and platforms.[36] India enacted the Digital Personal Data Protection Act in August 2023, introducing consent, notice, grievance rights, and extraterritorial reach where digital personal data of persons in India is processed.[37] Nigeria adopted a comprehensive Data Protection Act in 2023, establishing a dedicated commission and codifying processing principles and remedies.[38] Kenya's Data Protection Act of 2019 created the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner and defined cross-border transfer safeguards, adding enforcement

[30] International Telecommunication Union, *WSIS Outcome Documents: Geneva 2003–Tunis 2005* (Geneva: ITU, 2005).
[31] United Nations, *United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech* (New York: UN, 2019).
[32] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *A/77/288: Disinformation and Freedom of Opinion and Expression during Armed Conflicts* (Geneva: OHCHR, August 12, 2022).
[33] Executive Office of the Secretary-General, *Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 8 — Information Integrity on Digital Platforms* (New York: UN, 2023).
[34] UNESCO, *Guidelines for the Governance of Digital Platforms* (Paris: UNESCO, 2023).
[35] African Union, *African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention)*, adopted June 27, 2014; entry into force noted 2023.
[36] Autoridade Nacional de Proteção de Dados (Brazil), *Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados Pessoais (LGPD), Law No. 13.709/2018* (English materials and statute).
[37] Ministry of Electronics and IT (India), *The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023* (No. 22 of 2023), notified August 11, 2023.
[38] *Nigeria Data Protection Act, 2023* (Abuja: Federal Government of Nigeria).

capacity that many election bodies now rely upon for platform cooperation.[39] South Africa's POPIA entered full effect between 2020 and 2021, with the Information Regulator empowered to issue codes of conduct that affect ad-tech supply chains.[40] Indonesia's Personal Data Protection Law No. 27 of 2022 created a national framework and designated obligations for controllers and processors that apply to campaign ecosystems and platform partners.[41]

Intermediary liability and content rules are evolving and the courts are active. India amended its IT Rules to allow a government fact-checking unit for content "about the business of the Central Government," but the Supreme Court stayed the notification in March 2024 and, later, in September 2024 the Bombay High Court struck down the 2023 amendment by majority on free-speech grounds.[42] These cases illustrate a general lesson for developing states: broad speech controls attract constitutional risk; durable approaches focus on transparent duties, due process, and narrow tailoring.

ELECTION INTEGRITY, PLATFORM DUTIES, AND PUBLIC-INTEREST TRANSPARENCY

Election authorities are pairing legal mandates with operational tools. Brazil's Superior Electoral Court has issued a series of resolutions since 2019 governing online political advertising, disclosure, and platform cooperation. In March 2024 the Court inaugurated an Integrated Center for Confronting Disinformation and Defending Democracy to coordinate rapid response during the 2024 municipal cycle; global platforms have aligned some policy updates with these resolutions.[43] India's Election Commission applies the Model Code of Conduct to online content, requires pre-certification of political advertisements under its Media Certification and Monitoring Committees, and publishes handbooks that operationalize these standards for district officials.[44] UN system practice has complemented these moves with implementation support. UNDP's iVerify model has been deployed and adapted in multiple contexts, including Zambia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, to help local institutions verify claims at speed and in local languages during elections.[45] These tools are most effective when paired with platform virality friction and creator partnerships.

Outside the UN, the European Union's Digital Services Act has become a global reference for systemic-risk governance of platforms. The Commission opened formal DSA proceedings against TikTok in December 2024 on election-risk grounds and in May 2025 issued preliminary findings that the platform's ad repository breached transparency obligations, a step that could lead to fines and product changes that spill over into non-EU markets where the same systems run.[46] While the DSA is regional, its enforcement expectations on ad libraries, researcher access, and risk mitigation

[39] *Data Protection Act, 2019* (Nairobi: Republic of Kenya) and ODPC guidance.
[40] Republic of South Africa, *Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (POPIA)*; Information Regulator commencement notices, 2020–2021.
[41] Republic of Indonesia, *Personal Data Protection Law No. 27/2022* (bilingual text and analyses).
[42] Reuters, "India top court puts on hold unit for fact-checking online content about govt," March 21, 2024; analyses of *Kunal Kamra v. Union of India* striking down the 2023 IT Rules amendment, September 2024.
[43] Superior Electoral Court (Brazil), "Integrated Center for Confronting Disinformation and Defending Democracy (CIEDDE)," March 12, 2024; see also platform policy alignment notes.
[44] Election Commission of India, "Responsible and ethical use of social media," May 6, 2024; Model Code of Conduct portal and handbooks.
[45] UNDP, *Information Integrity for Electoral Institutions and Processes* (2024); UNDP iVerify guidance and country deployments in Zambia, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.
[46] European Commission press releases on DSA proceedings and preliminary findings against TikTok (December 16, 2024; May 14–15, 2025); corroborating wire reports.

are reshaping platform disclosures in many developing states that use those products during elections.

ECONOMIC LEVERS: DIGITAL TAXATION, COMPETITION, AND FISCAL CAPACITY FOR OVERSIGHT

Because your agenda follows socio-economic impact, fiscal instruments are part of the legal landscape that determines who captures value from political attention. Many developing states adopted destination-based VAT collection on cross-border digital services using OECD toolkits that make platforms the collection agents. South Africa has required VAT registration for foreign suppliers of electronic services since 2014 and expanded the regime in 2019; further updates continue to refine scope and thresholds.[47] Kenya adopted VAT on digital marketplace supplies in 2020 and has reinforced registration and compliance through Finance Act updates and guidance.[48] India introduced a separate Equalisation Levy in 2016 for online ads and expanded it in 2020 with a 2 percent levy on e-commerce supply of goods or services by non-resident operators.[49] Nigeria's 2020 Significant Economic Presence Order set a nexus for taxing non-resident digital suppliers.[50] These tax measures are implementable now and fund domestic capacity for audits, media literacy, and election integrity programs. In parallel, international negotiations on reallocating taxing rights over digital groups continue; while outcomes remain unsettled, the direction is toward more stable, rules-based allocation that, if concluded, could reduce leakages from domestic attention markets.

[47] South African Revenue Service, "Guide to supply of electronic services by foreign suppliers," updated January and April 2025; additional practitioner analyses.
[48] Kenya Revenue Authority, "VAT on Digital Marketplace Supply" and Finance Act 2023 highlights; practitioner alerts on DMS VAT.
[49] Government of India, "Equalisation Levy" overview and the 2020 Amendment Rules; analyses of the 2 percent levy on e-commerce supply.
[50] Federal Inland Revenue Service (Nigeria), *Companies Income Tax (Significant Economic Presence) Order, 2020*; practitioner summaries.

CURRENT SITUATION

We are an attention economy. Social media has revolutionised the way we connect with the world around us; its impact is felt even in the way we consume information. It allows for creators to directly communicate with their audience, as opposed to more traditional forms of media. Social media platforms are constantly looking for ways to grab the users' attention, therefore rewarding certain types of content.

- Bite-sized viral content over longer analytical content
- Content that caters to users' emotions, generating interaction on the posts
- Targeted advertising to deliver messages custom-made to specific demographics of users

This type of mass direct communication in the form of social media gives a whole new platform for politics. It seems to be a much more viable and cost-friendly option for politicians rather than spending huge budgets on mass media. Whether social media or mass media are more effective, is a different debate in itself. However it cannot be denied that social media is a whole new realm of communication, with potential opportunities that mass media cannot offer. Social media has the power to give anyone a chance to be heard. High-budget politicians have a unique opportunity to expand their voice further using social media, however social media's accessibility provides relative newcomers to politics an unique opportunity to create their following from scratch.

Former President of the USA Barack Obama leveraged social media to engage voters by sharing campaign information and mobilising supporters in his 2008 campaign. The 2019 Indian general elections saw the viral '#MainBhiChowkidar' movement on the social media platform now known as 'X' prompted by the Bharatiya Janata Party in response to the Indian National Congress.

However, the very tools that made social media a popular platform for campaigns have also made it vulnerable to misinformation. These platforms profit off the attention economy: they are rewarded for holding the users' attention. Therefore sensationalised content is prioritised in order to maximise engagement, preying on users' emotions and consequently increasing the spread of misinformation compared to fact-based reports. Subject matters that are emotionally charged, especially those that are tied to identity (e.g. race, religion, ideology) are susceptible to this. Social media businesses having the goal of engagement maximisation means that they are less incentivised to combat misinformation as it breeds engagement.

For example, manipulated video and text content, character assassinations, and political falsehoods were rampant during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. The candidates had their public images harmed. The people were susceptible to political polarisation, while Indonesian voters were left confused; they were unable to tell the difference between truthful and falsified information.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

United States of America: Social media has been incredibly important to narrative in the United States, especially as of late. The issue, however, lies in the question, 'How much is social media contributing to political polarisation?' Social media has been vital in contributing to the last few US Presidential elections, however are its effects dividing the population into extremism?[51]

India: Social media may be influencing political polarisation in regards to religion, caste, and political identity. Knowing that religion and politics are especially intertwined, what are the effects left by social media's involvement in politics, especially considering the country's large population with active social media users?[52]

China: China controls its own social media ecosystem (i.e. Weibo, Wechat) with strict censorship, introducing a distinct approach to social media's political impact. The CCP is using social media as a tool to reassert its presence in everyday Chinese society, and surveilling it so as to prevent any form of dissent. They enforce censorship through bodies such as the Cyberspace Administration of China. Recent crackdowns from the organisation target content that "maliciously misinterprets social phenomena, selectively exaggerates negative cases, and uses them as an opportunity to promote nihilistic or otherwise negative worldviews," as per the Cyberspace Administration of China.[53]

Russia/Ukraine: The Russia-Ukraine conflict has been on the social media front too, with Russian propaganda and Ukraine counter-propoganda. Social media is being used to gain sentiment for both sides' cause. The power of social media to shape global public opinion is on display through the Russia-Ukraine conflict.[54][55]

[51] Paul M. Barrett, "NYU Stern Center for Business & Human RightsFueling the Fire: How Social Media Intensifies U.S. Political Polarization – and What Can Be Done About It," July 1, 2025, https://bhr.stern.nyu.edu/publication/fueling-the-fire-how-social-media-intensifies-u-s-political-polarization-and-what-can-be-done-about-it/.
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[53] "China," Human Rights Watch, March 14, 2025, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/china.
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[55] Russell L. Weaver, "SOCIAL MEDIA, PROPAGANDA, AND THE UKRAINIAN CONFLICT," *J. INT'L MEDIA & ENT L.*, vol. 10, n.d., https://www.swlaw.edu/sites/default/files/2025-05/JIMEL%2010.2%20-%20Weaver.pdf.

POSSIBLE AREAS OF DISUSSION

Political ad transparency and influencer disclosure
Why it matters: Paid persuasion has shifted to creator posts and live streams that often lack labels. Clear disclosure protects voters' right to know who is paying and reduces covert narrative laundering.

Messaging apps, virality controls, and election windows
Why it matters: Forwards and broadcast lists can outrun corrections during silence periods. Targeted, time-bound friction buys verification time without breaking privacy.

Researcher access and data for public-interest audits
Why it matters: Independent audits are impossible without scoped data access. Evidence beats anecdotes when crafting proportionate, rights-respecting rules.

Multilingual moderation benchmarks
Why it matters: Harm clusters in languages with thin coverage. Benchmarks ensure protection is not reserved only for major languages and urban users.

Fact-checking integration and corrective delivery
Why it matters: Corrections rarely travel as far as falsehoods. In-feed context in local languages can close the reach gap at the moment of exposure.

Economic fairness in creator markets
Why it matters: Creators carry civic narratives but face late payments and risky briefs. Minimum contract and safety norms stabilize livelihoods and integrity.

Taxation of cross-border digital services
Why it matters: Ad money exits while regulators lack resources. Simple VAT collection on digital services can fund oversight, literacy, and local media.

Political data use and microtargeting limits
Why it matters: Sensitive-attribute inference enables precision manipulation. Guardrails on targeting and consent curb abuse without banning outreach.

Systemic risk assessments for elections
Why it matters: Platforms plan for shopping seasons but not always for polls. Pre-election risk reviews force concrete mitigation before harm peaks.

Support for local news and public-interest media
Why it matters: Without local reporting, partisan pages define reality. Light-touch funding and bargaining rules keep trusted baselines alive.

Diaspora amplification and cross-border coordination
Why it matters: Narratives jump borders via family groups and creators abroad. Coordinated rumor response prevents whack-a-mole across jurisdictions.

Public communications playbooks for election bodies
Why it matters: Citizens need accurate info in formats they actually see. Ready-to-post short videos and bilingual Q&A raise trust and compliance.

Competition and app-store terms
Why it matters: Gatekeepers decide which civic apps can scale. Fair terms on payments and portability lower barriers for local solutions.

Synthetic media labeling and provenance
Why it matters: Cheap fakes can sway tight contests. Lightweight labels and provenance signals help voters judge authenticity fast.

Safety and redress for targeted groups
Why it matters: Women, minorities, and journalists bear disproportionate harm. Fast lanes and trusted flaggers reduce chilling effects on participation.

Transparency in government communications online
Why it matters: Voters must distinguish public information from party content. Archiving and labeling rules prevent misuse of official channels.

Community standards, due process, and appeals
Why it matters: Over-removal during elections chills lawful speech. Clear notices and rapid appeals keep enforcement legitimate.

Media literacy at scale
Why it matters: Long-term resilience comes from habits, not hotlines. Low-cost formats like radio and creator skits teach verify-before-share.

Metrics and evaluation
Why it matters: You cannot manage what you do not measure. Shared indicators let regulators, platforms, and civil society track real progress.

Device and data affordability as participation enablers
Why it matters: Video-heavy politics excludes those who cannot stream. Handset and data support broadens who can speak and who can listen.

DOCUMENTATION

WORKING PAPERS

1. Working papers are intended to aid with the work of the Committee and especially the Draft Resolution, as well as to present the viewpoints of the delegates and the potential solutions to the topic.
2. Working paper does not require any Signatories or Sponsors. However, it should bear the name of the delegate or delegates who proposed it.
3. There is no set format for the Working Paper, i.e. the working paper does not have to be introduced in the resolution format. The Working Paper is referred to by its designated number.

POSITION PAPER

An MUN Position Paper, also known as Policy Paper, is a strategic document that gives an overview of a delegates country position.

A good Position Paper has Three Parts:

1. Country's Position on the topic
2. Country's Relation to the topic
3. Proposals of Policies to pass in a resolution

DRAFT RESOLUTION

1. Draft Resolution means a document drafted in the official format of the resolution.
2. No Draft Resolution shall be circulated without the previous approval of its required format and number of Sponsors and Signatories by the Chairpersons.
3. The ones recognized as the writers of the Draft Resolution are called "Sponsors". Chairpersons will set the required minimum number of Sponsors according to each Committee.
4. "Signatories" are the ones supporting the discussion regarding the Draft Resolution on the Floor and bear no further obligation. Chairpersons will set the required minimum number of Signatories according to each Committee.
5. One Member State cannot be "Sponsor" and "Signatory" at the same time.
6. Once the Draft Resolution has been introduced delegates cannot add themselves to the list of Sponsors anymore. However, they can be removed from the list by passing a request in written form to the Chairs. If the Draft Resolution does not have the number of Sponsors required, the document will be removed from the Floor immediately.
7. Delegates wishing to be added or removed from the list of Signatories can do so at any time. The request to do so should be passed to the Chairs in written form.
8. More than one Draft Resolution can be on the Floor at once.

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