XLV
UCHSMUN

United Nations General Assembly Second Committee: Economic and Financial Council (ECOFIN)

Welcome to the University of Calgary High School Model United Nations!

As delegates representing Members of the United Nations General Assembly Second Committee (GA2), you will be examining three key issues: Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All, Disaster Risk Reduction and the Role of the United Nations in Promoting Development in the Context of Globalization and Interdependence.

Committee Overview

The General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), which was established through the Charter of the United Nations in 1945. The General Assembly Second Committee is one of six General Assemblies and is responsible for discussing issues related to economic growth and development, particularly focusing on sustainable development, poverty eradication, agriculture and food security. The Second Committee also considers special items such as the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources.

Topic I: Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All.

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is one of the United Nations global goals for sustainable development. Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today. Be it for jobs, security, climate change, food production or increasing incomes, access to energy for all is essential. Today some 1.1 billion people lack access to electricity and some 2.9 billion people rely on unsustainable biomass for cooking and heating. At the same time, energy-related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) contribute to climate change, accounting for almost 80% of GHG emissions in many economies. Focusing on universal access to energy, increased energy efficiency and the increased use of renewable energy through new economic and job opportunities is crucial to creating more sustainable and inclusive communities and resilience to environmental issues like climate change. However, the challenge is far from being solved. Questions surrounding access to clean fuel and technology as well as around the integration of renewable energy into end-use applications in buildings, transport and industry remain unanswered.

The United Nations has an important role in facilitating national and international dialogue on how best to address issues such as climate change and the transition to renewable energy. To achieve its objectives, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) created

XLV
UCHSMUN

the Committee on Sustainable Energy, which has served as the driving force behind the UN's efforts on achieving SDG Goal 7. UNECE's activities aim to ensure access to affordable and clean energy to all and to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the carbon footprint of the energy sector. Under its current programme, UNECE has developed normative instruments such as guidance on best practices and standards in energy efficiency, renewable energy, natural gas and methane. Additionally, UNECE has prioritized, among other things, improving energy efficiency from source to use, facilitating economic integration and cooperation to promote sustainable development, and minimizing the impact of the energy sector on the environment from source to use.

The United Nations has passed several resolutions concerning access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. As the United Nations came closer to its deadline on the Millennium Development Goals, the General Assembly adopted A/RES/67/215, which provided a clear set of priorities for the UN in terms of the promotion of new and renewable sources of energy. It called for all relevant funding institutions, bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions and non-governmental organizations, to continue to support efforts aimed at the development of the energy sector in developing countries and countries with economies in transition to more renewable sources of energy. However, more importantly, it called upon Member States to make universal access to sustainable modern energy services a priority. This objective was incorporated in A/RES/70/1, which serves as the foundational piece for the UN's current efforts towards ensuring universal access to sustainable energy. It followed up with A/RES/71/233, which among other things, emphasized that need to increase the share of new and renewable sources of energy in the global energy mix, the necessity of establishing a modern energy system that is clean, low-carbon, carbon-resilient and safe, and underscored the potential of sustainable energy use to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The General Assembly has also considered regular reports issued by the Secretary General on items such as the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy For All and the International Year of Sustainable Energy For All.

2018 represented a year of progress in terms of affordable, reliable and modern energy for all due to recent progress in electrification, particularly in LDCs, and improvements in industrial energy efficiency. From 2000 to 2016, the proportion of the global population with access to electricity increased from 78 per cent to 87 per cent, with the absolute number of people living without electricity dipped to just below 1 billion. Despite recent trends in the right direction, 41% of the world's population were still cooking with polluting fuel and stove combinations (approximately 3 billion people). In addition, vast swathes of Africa and Asia lack access to electricity, despite reports of substantial progress in electricity access rates across Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. The outlook for electrification shows that the world is not yet on track to achieve universal access by 2030. In its future deliberations on this item, the Second Committee will most likely focus on building on recent progress towards universal, affordable, reliable and modern energy for all by 2030, as well as methods to assist developing countries build enough capacity to undertake a truly sustainable development agenda.

Questions for Discussion:

1. In what ways can the United Nations facilitate an expedited transition to renewable energy sources?
2. How can the international community assist the developing world in its transition to cleaner sources of energy?

Topic II: Natural Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction is the concept of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and reduce the causal factors of disasters, whether it be reducing exposure to hazards, lessening the vulnerability of people and property, managing land and environment in a sustainable way or improving preparedness and early warning for adverse events. The impact of disasters can be classified as domino-like in nature. Disasters often follow natural hazards, and their severity is dependent on the impact a certain hazard has on society. Such an impact is dependent on the choices that people make on their lives, how they grow their food, how they build their homes, what kind of government they have and how their financial system works. Disaster risk is further exacerbated by a combination of climate risk, resource scarcity and drought, environmental degradation, livelihoods impoverishment, demographic changes, and limited capacities to manage risks from natural, technological and biological hazards, including epidemic diseases. The threat is so significant, that the United Nations developed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which calls for the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries.

The United Nations primarily conducts disaster risk reduction activities through the Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Following the General Assembly's adoption of the *International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction* and the establishment of UNISDR in 1999, the office's mandate was expanded in 2001 to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields. As the UN office for disaster risk reduction, UNISDR supports the implementation, follow-up and review of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, a 15 year voluntary, non-binding agreement that maps out a broad, people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction, succeeding the *Hyogo Framework for Action* that was in force from 2005 to 2015. The UN also serves as part of the international emergency response system for sudden-onset emergencies. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) is designed to help the United Nations and governments of disaster-affected countries during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency and also assists in the coordination of incoming international relief at national level and/or at the site of the emergency.

The UN has long-been seized with the issue of disaster risk management. Its current efforts towards disaster risk reduction are based on the Geneva Mandate on the Disaster Reduction. The goal of UN efforts is to build resiliency among all communities to the effects of natural, technological and environmental hazards by reducing the compound risks they pose to the social and economic vulnerabilities within modern society. Each year, the General Assembly considers reports submitted by the Secretary General on the implementation of the corresponding disaster risk management framework in place such as the Sendai Framework. In A/RES/72/218, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to continue to prioritize and support the development of inclusive national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, in accordance with the targets of the Sendai Framework, in addition to developing coherent metrics for measuring and reporting on the impact of disasters under the Sendai Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant instruments. In A/RES/71/222, the General Assembly proclaimed the period from 2018 to 2028 as the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", which promoted coherence across the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and other corresponding frameworks. It also leverages the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, a biennial forum for information exchange, discussion of latest developments, knowledge and partnership-building across sectors. In May 2013, the UN adopted Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction or Resilience, where the following objectives were identified: a) ensure that development policies, programming risks and investments in every country are informed by risks assessments; b) provide multi-stakeholder national and local risk governance systems and plans; c) promote national and local public budgets, development co-operation, private sector investments, and climate finance mechanisms that integrate disaster risk reduction; d) promote the integration of disaster preparedness for relief and recovery with development programmes that reduce disaster risk and build resilience. The Plan also provides actions to align with the forthcoming UN system-wide strategic approach to climate change.

UNISDR recently announced the beginning of a historic effort to collect comprehensive data on disaster losses as UN Member States to implement the global plan for reducing such losses. Given the recent-steps on improving information-sharing, it is therefore important to focus on the other two key issues; ensuring that developing states can respond effectively to disasters and the impact of disasters on women and children. Firstly, research has indicated that, on average, natural disasters are estimated to cost a third of a trillion dollars a year, a figure that is twice the size of all official development assistance sent to developing countries by developed countries. Given that poorer countries suffer disproportionately when disaster strikes, it is important to consider how the international community can best support the developing world in capacity-building, whether it be through strengthening infrastructure in such countries, or 'insuring' the developing world against natural disasters. Secondly, women and children are likely more affected by natural disasters than men. The 7th Open Working Group on Sustainable Development recognized that women are 14 times are more likely to die in disasters. Women,

particularly those living in poverty, suffer the most from disasters, because they carry the burden of the long-term impacts of loss of land, livelihood and security. Eliminating gender discrimination was recognized as a central part of the UN Disaster Risk Reduction agenda.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why are women more likely than men to die in natural disasters? How can the UN approach this issue?
2. How can the UN leverage new information-sharing tools international community promote resilience among developing countries?

Topic III: Role of the United Nations in Promoting Development in the Context of Globalization and Interdependence

As the international community implements the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it has been reminded on how interdependent the world has become. This global interdependence encompasses the areas of finance, trade, communications, technology, the movement of people and the exchange of ideas, with far-reaching implications for national development strategies and objectives. Globalization has unleashed a wide array of opportunities, as well as challenges for realizing sustainable development. It has fuelled economic growth across the world, and in particular, has allowed a number of developing countries to make major inroads in poverty reduction through increased trade opportunities. Furthermore, empowered by the interconnected nature of today's international system, civil society organizations have increased their influence and capacity to tackle global challenges, particularly in development. Yet, despite these positive developments, globalization has not fully realized its goal of fostering equitable growth and sustainable development. As a result, globalization and multilateralism have been challenged by popular discontent in a number of countries over the past years. It remains a challenge to ensure that all countries and all people benefit from globalization's full potential.

While the United Nations does not have a specific office or committee dedicated to this specific item, it has a key role to play in realizing the vision of an equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization. According to the Secretary-General's report titled *Fulfilling the Promise of Globalization: Advancing Sustainable Development in an Interconnected World*, the UN and other international institutions have a role to play in setting norms to ensure that globalization works for all. Landmark agreements such as the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, represent a normative action plan that attempt to address many of the challenges associated with globalization. The Sustainable Development Goals, and the targets embodied in the 2030 Agenda are identified as the main UN priorities in terms of development. In December 2018, the Second Committee adopted the report Globalization and Interdependence The report represented an updated overview of the major international economic and policy challenges for equitable and inclusive sustained economic growth and sustainable development and of the role of the United Nations in addressing those issues, as well as possible ways and means to overcome

those challenges. Besides this, the Report emphasized the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and the coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed upon by the international community. The focus was also on strengthening coordination within the United Nations system in close cooperation with all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions in order to support sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The General Assembly has also adopted resolutions such as A/RES/67/289 and A/RES/71/243 to support global and regional programmes, measures and policies aimed at expanding the development opportunities of all countries.

In some countries, support for globalization and multilateralism has recently been undermined by popular discontent, primarily driven by inequality. While such discontent is not new, its political implications have grown as many people have questioned their countries' commitment to globalization and its institutions. The negative impacts associated with globalization have fuelled policies that seek to roll back the institutional and normative system, including a retreat from global and regional agreements. A key issue that requires examination is the impact of complex policy frameworks on trade. While international leaders have recognized international trade as an engine for development, benefits from trade have been unequal. More open trade has often been associated with widening income inequality in many countries, along with job losses and declining wages for certain categories of workers. Facilitating trade has become increasingly relevant in terms of ensuring the inclusion of developing countries in international trade, reflected in World Trade Organization provisions on special and differential treatment that can help increase trading opportunities for developing countries. In addition to trade, barriers to sustainable development, particularly in developing countries, have also been observed in terms of access to technology. To overcome imbalances regarding rapid technological change, the United Nations has been mandated by the 2030 Agenda to play an active role in fostering exchanges in science and technology, through instruments such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). Lastly, the UN has identified migration as an important component of sustainable development. The immigration policies of destination countries and the legal status of migrants can have important impacts on societies. The number of international migrants reached 244 million in 2015 worldwide, an increase of 41 per cent compared to 2000. In September 2016, the General Assembly decided to develop a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, which serves as a significant opportunity to improve governance on migration, address challenges associated with current migration and strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

Questions for Discussion:

1. How can the United Nations promote international arrangements that promote sustainable development and equitable trade between developing and developed countries?

2. In what ways can the international community strengthen current international technological exchanges and lower the imbalances caused by rapid technological development?

3. How can the principles and guidelines set forth by the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration be implemented in a manner that promotes sustainable development?

XLV
UCHSMUN

Bibliography and Further Reading

General Assembly of the United Nations (2018). *Economic and Financial Committee – Second Committee.* Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/ga/second/

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2015). *Securing Affordable and Sustainable Energy Supply.* Retrieved from http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/energy/se/pdfs/Booklet_Dec2015/Booklet_Sustainable.Energy_Dec.2015.pdf

Sustainable Development Goals. (2018). *Affordable and Clean Energy.* Retrieved from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/energy/

United Nations Committee on Sustainable Energy. (2018). *Committee on Sustainable Energy.* Retrieved from http://www.unece.org/energy/se/com.html.

Sustainable Energy for All (2018). *About Us.* Retrieved from https://www.seforall.org/about-us.

United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (2013). *UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience.* Retrieved from https://www.preventionweb.net/files/33703_actionplanweb14.06cs1.pdf.

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2013). *Ms. Shamshad Akhtar Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs and Social Affairs speech.* Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/usg/statements/asg/2013/10/report-of-the-secretary-general-on-globalization-and-interdependence.html.

UN General Assembly. (2009). *Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence.* Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/673711/files/A_RES_64_210-EN.pdf

UN General Assembly (2011). *Globalization and interdependence: role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence.* Report of the Second Committee. Retrieved from https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/630/41/pdf/N1163041.pdf?OpenElement

UN General Assembly (2016). *Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.* Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/233.

Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (2014). *Disaster Risk Reduction.* Retrieved from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5708women2.pdf

XLV
UCHSMUN

UN General Assembly (2017). *Disaster Risk Reduction.* Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from https://www.unocha.org/our-work/coordination/un-disaster-assessment-and-coordination-undac

UN General Assembly (2017). *Fulfilling the Promise of Globalization: Advancing Sustainable Development in an Interconnected World.* Report of the Secretary-General adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from http://undocs.org/A/72/301

UN General Assembly (2011). *Role of the United Nations in Promoting Development in the Context of Globalization and Interdependence.* Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/un_resolutions/a_res_66_210_e.pdf

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *What is Disaster Risk Reduction?* Retrieved from https://www.unisdr.org/who-we-are/what-is-drr

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.* Report of the Secretary-General adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from https://www.unisdr.org/files/resolutions/N1824255-en.pdf

UN General Assembly (2018). *Disaster Risk Reduction.* Resolution adopted by the General Assembly. Retrieved from https://www.unisdr.org/files/resolutions/N1746633-en.pdf

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. *The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.* Retrieved from https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/global-platform

Giugale, M (2017). *Time to Insure Developing Countries Against Natural Disasters.* World Bank. Retrieved from https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2017/10/11/time-to-insure-developing-countries-against-natural-disasters