

## **LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Greetings!!

We take pleasure in welcoming all of you to the High Level Political Forum being simulated at VISMUN 2025. This letter from the Executive Board will help you get a clear direction about the committee, the agenda that is supposed to be discussed and the method of researching that has to be followed. It is, however, important that you read the entire background guide very carefully and after reading it, focus on the topics that have been suggested for research and the links to the articles that have been attached herewith. The way of approaching things and concepts in this background guide will be slightly different and it is preferred that you respect the way that has been suggested and then research in the manner so told in order to gain the maximum knowledge and also to get a clear direction of how the committee will function.

This background guide like other background guides in MUNs and other conferences will not run into a number of pages but will be a brief document consisting less of matter to learn about things but research links, sorted topic wise for you, which you are supposed to read, which most people generally do not do in MUN Conferences and/or simulations of the same sort. By reading these articles/news reports/documents attached with the research links you will be able to gain around 80% of the knowledge about the committee and the agenda and the only thing you would be required to do after reading the matter provided in this background guide is to work on the remaining 20% matter for your research from as many sources as you can find on the internet.

**Here are certain Rules for Researching that you must follow:**

**Rule Number 1:** Read from as many sources as possible so as to get a wider angle of researching over things. Read a topic from at least 2-3

articles or sources and then prepare points on the same and not speeches.

**Rule Number 2:** Read from more and more authentic documents of sources for getting genuine perspective about things. For example: Since this committee is the HLPF, sources like the official website of the United Nations and that of its agencies, or articles published on the official sources like new agencies including Reuters and the like shall be preferred over sources like Wikipedia and Quora. Needless to say, these sources like Wikipedia can be used to read about things but cannot be relied upon as definitive proof or source for your research. Expand the horizons of your research by reading from at least 2-3 sources about a particular topic and then make notes. Focus on analysis and critical examination of research - this will carry a great weightage in the marking pattern for the committee.

Kindly feel free to write to me or contact me for queries or clarifications, if any at the contact details provided below.

Best of luck and happy researching!

Warm Regards,

Mr. Priyanshu Grover

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE** **HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM**

- Established in 2012 through the Rio+20 Conference and officially launched in 2013 under the UN General Assembly.
- Serves as the **central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.
- Meets annually under the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every four years under the UN General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Government.
- Functions:
  - Reviews global progress on SDGs.
  - Promotes knowledge-sharing and partnerships.
  - Encourages peer learning through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs).

Kinly note: Delegates should remember that the HLPF is **policy-oriented**, not crisis-driven.

## **UNDERSTANDING THE 2030 AGENDA**

- Adopted in **2015 by 193 UN Member States**.
- Includes **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and **169 targets** to be achieved by **2030**.
- Core Principles:
  - Leave No One Behind.
  - Universality (applies to all countries).
  - Integration (economic, social, environmental).
  - Inclusivity (engaging multiple stakeholders).
- **Why local action matters:** 65% of SDG targets are dependent on local action (e.g., clean water, sanitation, sustainable cities, gender equality).

## **THE CONCEPT OF LOCALISING SDGs**

- **Localization** means taking the global goals and adapting them to **local contexts, policies, and communities**.
- Examples:
  - **SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities)** → Managed by municipalities through urban planning, public transport, housing.
  - **SDG 6 (Clean Water)** → Requires local water supply systems and sanitation projects.
- UN-Habitat and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments highlight localization as **key to accelerating SDG achievement**.
- **Why is it important?**
  - Global goals risk being abstract without local ownership.
  - Cities and communities are **closest to citizens' daily lives**.

## **ROLE OF CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

- Cities house more than **55% of the world's population** (expected to reach 68% by 2050).
- Local governments:
  - Provide public services (water, sanitation, education, health).
  - Implement climate action policies (waste management, energy efficiency, public transport).
  - Mobilize local resources and partnerships.
- **Case Example:**
  - **New York City** created its own "Voluntary Local Review" (VLR) of SDG implementation.
  - **Bhopal, India** localized SDG monitoring through citizen data initiatives.

## **ROLE OF GRASSROOTS GOVERNANCE & CIVIL SOCIETIES**

- Grassroots organizations represent people at the **local, often marginalized, level**.
- They provide:
  - Local knowledge and needs assessments.
  - Advocacy for inclusion of marginalized groups (women, youth, indigenous peoples).
  - Monitoring and accountability.
- **Community-led examples:**
  - Women's cooperatives in Kenya working on SDG 5 (Gender Equality).
  - Slum dwellers federations in Mumbai helping improve SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities).
- Grassroots action ensures **inclusive development** and prevents "top-down" approaches.

## **KEY CHALLENGES IN LOCALISING SDGs**

1. **Financing:** Cities often lack funds to implement SDGs effectively.
2. **Capacity Gaps:** Limited technical expertise, data, and trained human resources.
3. **Inequality:** Risk of leaving marginalized groups behind.
4. **Coordination Problems:** Disconnect between national and local policies.
5. **Monitoring and Data:** Lack of localized indicators and data collection mechanisms.
6. **Climate Change & Disasters:** Local governments are often first responders, but resources are insufficient.
- 7.

## **CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTISES**

1. **Barcelona, Spain** – Created a “City SDG Plan” aligning local policies with global goals.
2. **Bogotá, Colombia** – Engaged citizens in participatory budgeting aligned with SDGs.
3. **Japan** – Established SDG Future Cities program, where municipalities adopt innovative local solutions.
4. **Kerala, India** – Used decentralized planning to align community development with SDGs.

## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND FINANCING**

- Role of international institutions: UNDP, UN-Habitat, World Bank.
- **Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs):** Local equivalent of VNRs, increasing in adoption.
- Need for **multi-level governance:** Coordination between national governments, cities, and communities.
- Financing solutions:
  - Municipal bonds.
  - Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).
  - International funds (Green Climate Fund, SDG Fund).

## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. How can national governments support cities in localizing the SDGs?
2. What role can grassroots organizations play in ensuring inclusivity?
3. Should local governments be given more autonomy to manage SDG funding?
4. How can Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) strengthen accountability?
5. How can international cooperation accelerate local SDG progress?
6. What innovative financing mechanisms could empower cities?
7. How can delegates ensure “Leave No One Behind” at the community level?

## **SUGGESTED READINGS & REFERENCES**

- UNDESA: “The Future is Local – Guidelines for SDG Localization.”
- UNDP: “Accelerating Development: Empowering Local Actors.”
- Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments – SDG Reports.
- Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) Database.