

**SunMUN Economic & Social Council
Research Guide
2022**

Head Chair: Frances Sinoc

Delegates of the Economic and Social Council,

Greetings! My name is Frances Sinoc and I will be the head chair of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the 13th Annual Session of the Model UN Club at Arizona State University. I am delighted to have the opportunity to facilitate and witness young, empowered individuals debate and discuss some of the most important issues our world is currently facing.

I would like to take this opportunity to share more about myself. I was first introduced to Model UN as a junior in high school. Prior to that, I had no knowledge of the club as I had just moved from the Philippines and did not have much experience practicing diplomacy, debate, or in policy making. It didn't take long until I thoroughly enjoyed my MUN experience; the high school ASU MUN conference was my first one and I was honored to receive two awards for that conference for Outstanding Novice Policy Statement and Outstanding Novice Delegate for representing Canada in the General Assembly. That same year, I was honored with the Best Position Paper for representing Azerbaijan in the Economic and Social Council for Asia and the Pacific, which is a regional commission of ECOSOC. Since graduating from high school in 2020, I have reprioritized my time towards achieving my Nursing degree at Arizona State University and have become involved in the Philippine American Student Association on campus as well as being the Culture Chair of the organization last year.

Before the conference, I expect all delegates to read this issue book to be prepared for a properly-written policy statement and for meaningful discussions and debate with other delegates during the committee. This guide contains helpful information that will facilitate the direction of committee sessions, along with questions for you to consider as a delegate of the country you are representing. Further housekeeping rules and committee expectations will be explained upon the beginning of committee sessions.

Whether you are a veteran or novice delegate, I hope that this committee, and this conference as a whole, refreshes your view on the world. I hope that our discussions and the statements of your fellow delegates catch your curiosity and inspire you to learn more about the world. Our future depends on today's learners, and I am honored to be a small part of your Model UN journey and of your learning journey as a whole. Best of luck and I look forward to seeing all of you in November!

Sincerely,

Frances Sinoc

The Economic and Social Council

Established in 1945, the Economic and Social Council was founded as one of the six main bodies of the United Nations as part of the UN Charter. This specific body is primarily tasked with furthering sustainable development on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, thus influencing the advancement of other fields, such as those relating to culture and health. This includes health promotion, bettering work conditions, addressing climate change, and peacebuilding. ECOSOC is entrusted with facilitating the work related to these dimensions, coordinating with other UN bodies and agencies, national governments, and private organizations, especially to create strong frameworks and policies in furthering the Sustainable Development Goals.

This council specifically reaffirms the 2030 SDGs by conducting international conferences and committee sessions to continue discussions between regional and functional commissions within the council on how to best achieve the goals within a timely manner. More recently, the council is examining the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the environmental, economic, and social areas of achieving the SDGs, along with taking action on other specific developmental issues around the world. As the purpose of this council is to ultimately promote public-private partnerships and joint intergovernmental action towards economic and social progress globally, it aims to create programs and resolutions that improve the lives of many and advance internationally agreed upon goals.

Equalizing Access to Public Healthcare

In the midst of a pandemic, along with both the rise and persistence of other health concerns beyond virulent diseases, the global population has turned to healthcare for education, cures, and assistance with regards to health-related needs. Accessibility of healthcare is paramount in maintaining global stability and pursuing international development, yet the multifaceted nature of global health makes the pursuit of equalized access a challenge. Presence or absence of resources, robust financial systems, insufficient health structures, and other factors are contributors to overcoming this in spite of continuous donations towards global health issues such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. One of the functions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), as detailed in the United Nations Charter of 1945, is to make recommendations with regards to health in the international community. It is therefore within the role of this council to address resolutions to this issue by identifying barriers to equalized access, and expanding the reach of and advancing the quality of public healthcare.

History

The emergence of high-mortality diseases, such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, and tuberculosis, prompted the need for immediate and efficient public healthcare. The rise of chronic, non-communicable diseases have also called for an increase in the need for accessible health resources. To respond to this, many member nations strived to strengthen their healthcare systems and increase those who have access to them, even using it as incentive for worker retention through health insurance. Still, developing countries continue to face inadequate health services, and within them, the poorest of them have access to even less effective care. Health systems in these countries have historically been weaker due to lack of human and financial resources, insufficient health information systems, and the absence of transparency and of the dissemination of proper patient education. Moreover, even in the presence of accessible healthcare, its distribution is still not considered fair. Social and economic factors have influenced who receives healthcare. For example, in societies where women are traditionally seen as unequal to their male counterparts, the health of women and children suffer where basic standards for healthcare are not established for them even when the protection of their health is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Still, strides toward making healthcare more accessible in spite of social barriers are underway. The past two decades have shown a decline in disease, maternal, and neonatal mortality due to the expansion of health care, according to the World Health Organization. Much still needs to be done, however, to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals for health.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and Other Health Concerns

One of the most current and pressing strains to public healthcare was the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020. This pandemic shed light on the importance of fortified health care systems, those equipped with a competent workforce and appropriate resources, in caring for a population quickly devastated by a contagious virus. However, it simultaneously showed the invaluable role of the healthcare workforce in providing care for patients and highlighted the glaring inequities and inaccessibilities experienced by many communities when faced with a threat to public health. Lockdowns have affected the ability to generate income in low-income households. Lack of resources (beds, ventilators, and the like), especially in poorer areas, made it difficult to provide care for all patients. A shortage in healthcare workers makes equal distribution of care providers even more challenging. These, and more, were contributors and determinants of the health of populations globally. Even after the height of the pandemic, inequities in COVID-19 vaccine distribution also arose. Even with the COVAX campaign, where donations came from more developed countries to aid with vaccination of populations of less developed countries, administration of vaccines was already difficult. As said by Secretary-General António Guterres in April 2021 with regard to vaccine distribution, countries of low and middle income had to “watch and wait.”

Not only is this the current health concern concentrated on viruses and diseases, it is also concerned with the health crises that arise in the absence of access to routine care to improve overall well-being and its longevity. This includes the monitoring of dental hygiene, periodic screening tests, and maternal care among others that are critical to prevention of chronic diseases or other health conditions. Inaccess to these services pose great health risks for developing countries especially, as they are already confronted with the health concerns that arise from the environmental and lifestyle effects of industrialization and manufacture-work. The World Health Organization has predicted a further rise in morbidities in developing countries as caused by a lack of primary prevention programs and access to preventative health care, a rise as high as 17% within the aging population. This is also accompanied with a stark contrast in the funding for these services between developed and developing countries. Recent data has shown that low- and middle-income countries primarily spend health-related expenses on accessing health care, but less than 40% of the expenditure on health care is funded by the government. This makes it difficult for those of lower income to access resources and education to prevent compromised health conditions.

The common thread with these health crises are the populations most affected. Vulnerable and poor communities, those without adequate access to clean water, food, medicine, or technology remain at risk for outbreaks that further spread disease. In Latin America, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) chief economist Eric Parrado emphasized in 2020 that the poor are the

most victimized by climate change and by lower quality health care and education. For example, the postponement of vaccination campaigns, which aim to decrease the risk of acquiring and spreading deadly diseases, poses a risk for many communities. Such occurred in the first half of 2021 when the World Health Organization was unable to perform 60 widespread vaccination campaigns meant to reach 50 countries, half of which are in Africa, in part due to the disruption brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. 228 million people were impacted by the postponement of the vaccination campaign. These vaccines were to be distributed to children, the most vulnerable of the population, to protect them from preventable diseases, such as polio and yellow fever, that are otherwise deadly in the absence of immunization. As many other countries report difficulty in distributing vaccines, and the gap for equalizing its distribution remains unclosed, this remains a public health concern for the international community.

United Nations Involvement

The United Nations has long valued the importance of health in the global population. The 3rd Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) emphasizes health as a priority to ensure the well-being of people worldwide. Acting accordingly, the United Nations has taken numerous steps to acknowledge the inequalities in accessing health care, one of which was by recognizing the importance of primary health care for improved health for all in the Declaration of Alma-Ata in 1978. Focus shifted to the poorest, and consequently most vulnerable, populations as social and economic considerations made to health models pointed to lower health literacy and poor sanitation. It has since furthered its goals by urging nation states towards universal health care. The General Assembly, in the 2012 resolution A/RES/67/81 on Global Health and Foreign Policy, noted the significance of providing access to affordable and high-quality health care. Along with suggestions for how member states can transition towards universal health care, this resolution also expanded upon the financial barriers, such as potential impoverishment and debt, that hinder poorer individuals from seeking care. High-level meetings, as occurred in 2019, continue to discuss how to alleviate the financial risk that nations face in meeting the 2030 goal of achieving universal health care - the Universal Health Care 2030 initiative. In pursuit of how to best meet the 3rd SDG through this initiative, hearings with multiple parties involved in healthcare - parliamentarians, the private sector, and other relevant agencies - took place. Participant organizations' statements were also collected so that their policies and suggestions may be reflected in the hearing and in how the initiative may best be executed. With regards to preventative health care, the World Health Organization developed the Innovative Care for Chronic Conditions Framework (ICCC) in 2002 to ease the burden that disease can bring to a population by outlining the need for better dissemination of information and surveillance of population health with regards to chronic disease.

Conclusion

As the international community has quickly come to learn, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, global health crises have the power to destabilize economies and the lives of many. The fortification of public health care systems to strive towards equitable access is critical to avoiding such instability. Hence, the United Nations pursues means for advancing the feasibility of universal health care. The future may hold advancement towards fulfilling the UHC30 initiative as the United Nations continues to support nations towards this goal, yet this will not come without its contentions. Many member states hold reservations against the feasibility of this ambitious initiative. However, what is valuable to understand is that by strengthening health systems, nations are better equipped in times of crises and emergencies. By thoroughly examining the barriers that hinder universal health care implementation within sessions of the Economic and Social Council, member states should thoughtfully consider the most efficient way to provide equitable, accessible, and high-quality public healthcare for the global population.

Guiding Questions

- How can the international community best address the need for equitable access to health care, especially to the poorest of the poor?
- What current healthcare plans does your country have in place?
- What is your country's stance on universal health care?
- Consider the actions of the United Nations in expanding the reach of health care and how it can be made more equitable. Are there any policies in place within your country that could make the UHC30 initiative more feasible to attain?

Responsibility of Funding for Sustainable Development Goals

In 2020, data showed that one out of nine people suffered from hunger, and 10% of the world population was considered extremely impoverished. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created by the United Nations in hope of mitigating these and other issues relating to the bettering of quality of life worldwide. Substantial support from member states is necessary in order to see the SDGs come to fruition. This includes contributing resources, particularly financial resources, to properly fund and help progression towards these goals. These resources are contributed by various donor nations, each with their own priorities for which goal they specifically want to fund and see come to fruition. One of the responsibilities of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is to assess the status of financing sustainable development. Hence, it is within the scope of this council to oversee and review financing for the SDGs, including the evaluation of member state cooperation and commitment to the success of the initiative and in innovating new frameworks or resolutions for how to accelerate progress.

History

Prior to the formal initiation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), actions by the UN similar to these goals have already been underway. The United States and Japan, among other countries, contributed to SDG-like activities, such as developing sustainable cities and peace and justice, between 2000 and 2013. Officially established in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals were created to be achieved by 2030 as a blueprint for creating a more sustainable and more ideal world for all of the global population. These 17 goals are a call to action for all nations to work towards in the face of fast-emerging issues globally, from climate change to improving health and access to education, to protecting environmental resources while stimulating economic growth. Given the ambitious nature of this undertaking, appropriate leadership, policies, and funding must be created in order to fully reach this goal. Funding, according to the UN Sustainable Development Group, is defined as “transferring resources from a financial contributor to a recipient.” The similarities between funding prior to and with the current SDGs are that donor countries allocate their donations towards specific goals. It should be noted that funding is different from financing, which is described by the same group as constructing “different financial flows to achieve a common result,” indicating that it is more an investment than it is dedicated money for a purpose. Financing the SDGs stresses the need for transparent financial flows as contributors to the financial resources of the agenda, namely national governments and the private sector, designate their contributions to specific economic, social, or environmental priorities.

The Role of the Joint SDG Fund and The Private Sector

The funding for the Sustainable Development Goals primarily comes from the Joint SDG fund, an inter-agency developed fund dedicated to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs from the national level by bringing about substantial and strategic policy changes. It functions as a broad, multi-partner trust fund, incentivizing the creation of transformative policies through the financial assistance provided from a pooled, collectivized sum. The projects funded by this organization are formed on a unique, national basis within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDG). This allows them to create policies and programs specifically tailored to their country, and incentivized funding from the Joint SDG fund allows accelerated progress towards achieving SDG actions within their country. The primary challenge that the Joint SDG fund is attempting to address and overcome is the growing funding gap within developing countries, meaning that there is a growing and alarming difference in the finances needed to progress with SDGs within these countries and the finances they currently have. As of 2014, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported that USD 3.3 to 4.5 trillion is needed by developing countries to meet SDG targets annually, but is witnessing a widening annual gap of USD 2.5 trillion between current funding abilities and the funding needed to achieve their SDG targets. This gap is also not limited to developing countries, but is also observed in economic and social sectors. For example, financing for the goals regarding health and education have a combined amount of approximately USD 390 billion but investments fall short in these sectors, whereas there has been a greater investment in goals relating to power, but this investment requires much more in funding and towers at around USD 950 billion. This comes across as a prioritization towards power, when it is a much bigger undertaking than health and education despite these goals requiring less resources to finance. Concerns regarding imbalanced prioritization and leaving certain goals behind come to the surface when faced with statistics such as these.

The private sector also plays a significant role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in a timely manner. This sector is comprised of different contributors, from sovereign wealth funds, pension funds, and other investments and private capital sources. Public-private partnerships are critical for long-term success as they help to fill in the funding gaps explained earlier. The operations overseen by the private sector, along with the allocation of funds, function and are based on risk assessment, spearheaded by the idea that an investment put towards a more sustainable goal will lead to greater returns on that investment. The primary concern regarding these contributions from the private sector, however, is an inefficient allocation of funds from private capital. Many SDG projects are unique and are tailored to the needs of the countries most in need of them, and require adequate funding. It becomes the responsibility of the private sector to assess the return received from their investment into SDG projects, and to bear the risk that comes with it; hence the apprehension of private organizations to fully invest adequate funds towards these projects. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

reported in 2018 that 61.6% of funds from the private sector was dedicated towards economic infrastructure and services, a large sum compared to the only 5.6% allocated for social infrastructure such as education, health, sanitation, and water. Further disparities in allocation lessen the probability of reaching comparably achievable, mostly social, goals, creating competition between SDG projects.

The challenge with funding the SDGs is that the responsibility of funding them ultimately falls on national governments, whether it is to see the SDGs come to fruition within their own countries or in part to assist other nations to achieve them by donation to the Joint SDG fund. Developing, low-income countries are hindered from doing so as they are already economically disadvantaged and tend to have the largest funding gap. Furthermore, factors such as corruption and lack of transparency, of which are prevalent in developing nations, hinder the possibility of better investment in SDG projects occurring in these countries. Simultaneously, the responsibility of increased spending is taken up by developed, higher-income countries in spite of the higher need for developing countries for increased SDG financing. Numerous systemic issues and maldistribution of already available resources on a global scale in the absence of stable financial frameworks impede further progression of the SDGs.

United Nations Involvement

Sustainable development has been a priority to the United Nations even prior to the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. The Millennium Development Goals Fund (MDG-F), established in 2007, precedes the current Joint SDG fund, focused on the most pressing Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are still prioritized by the SDGs, such as eradicating poverty and addressing food insecurity and hunger. Finding ways to ensure that achieving the SDGs has adequate funding and has plans for financing have been discussed across three significant international conferences - in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002, in Doha, Qatar in 2008, and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2015. While the world has made progress since the Monterrey Consensus, specifically in scientific advancements and stimulating economic progress in developing nations, much was still yet to be addressed. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, developed from the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, addresses the transparency required by donor countries and agencies by. This instituted a new global framework that highlighted actions that needed to be taken on the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of the SDGs while engaging investors, whether it be the private sector, national governments, or other UN bodies, through transparent financial flows. Within ECOSOC, the ECOSOC Forum on Financing and Development was created as a follow up on the Addis Ababa Agenda. Annual reports are presented to see that financing remains transparent and progress is made even on the national level. Furthermore, aside from the joint SDG fund,

joint programs through national and international partnerships greatly assist in the funding of several SDGs as well.

Conclusion

The Sustainable Development Goals continue to be a critical initiative in improving the livelihoods of people around the world. As such, it is imperative that steps towards seeing its success are acted upon by member states. Current funding disparities and misallocation of funds are some factors that hinder projects that progress SDGs. Other complicated challenges include systemic issues found in global partnerships and prioritization of incentives, of which must be resolved as part of creating better means of funding the SDGs. The United Nations and this council continue to explore more innovative ways to better fund these goals. These methods could potentially lead to better returns on investment and increased transparency and accountability for countries receiving funding, of which would address the perceived risks and reservations held by the private sector. It is in this light that this council, within its responsibility towards sustainable development, further seeks out frameworks, policies, or programs that will bring about promising change to the funding of the SDGs that will hopefully bring about a better future for all.

Guiding Questions

- How can the United Nations ensure that none of the Sustainable Development Goals are left behind?
- What, if at all, has your nation contributed to the Joint SDG fund? Is the nation you're representing more frequently a donor or recipient?
- How can national governments address the need for transparency and accountability with regards to the allocation of funds towards SDGs?
- What partnerships, either public or private, exist within your nation that help close any funding gaps?
- How can transparency be increased to better invite private investors towards funding SDG-related projects?

Reducing Inequality in All Forms

Lack of access to healthcare, education, and opportunities greatly impact women, refugees, the disabled, the elderly, and other marginalized groups around the world. While much has been done to reduce these inequalities, in different parts of the world, many are still discriminated against and experience inequality in multiple forms, inherently violating international human rights laws. The recent COVID-19 pandemic further exemplified existing inequalities and impacted already vulnerable groups, and have been accompanied by a rise in hate speech, limited progress on gender equality, and a decline in income internationally. Reducing inequality within and among countries is the 10th Sustainable Development Goal out of the 17 total established by the United Nations in 2015, goals including eliminating poverty and improving the quality of education. As such, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), in acting to promote the SDGs and oversee its success, must explore viable solutions to reducing inequality.

History

Inequality has persisted throughout history and continues to permeate the social and economic aspects of the world to date. It takes form between countries and between populations of these countries, heightening further in more recent years due to globalization, industrialization, and immigration. Economic inequalities between higher-skilled and higher earning workers and their lower-earning counterparts have widened the rift. These have also been influenced by social biases and stigmatizations of wealthier and more powerful populations, and the evolution of how prominent these biases are in society. However, efforts to reduce economic inequality lately have taken the form of increasing taxation and enhancing labor rights, such as the policies enacted by Norway and Denmark. Still, these are still insufficient in further bridging a continuously growing inequality gap. Separately, actions to reduce racial inequality have been brought forth by numerous countries, declaring that discrimination on the basis of race is considered illegal and punishable by law. Multiple countries have also established specialized monitoring bodies and departments towards ensuring that racial discrimination properly addressed, from mandating investigation of racially discriminatory complaints to creating councils that voice the concerns of racial minorities in a country. Yet, much is still yet to be achieved by many countries that, even with these institutions in place, experience high rates of racial profiling, discrimination, and violence. On a different note, gender inequality towards women and members of the LGBT community, historically having faced unjust decriminalization and the absence of enjoying their basic human rights due to their sex or gender identity. These inequalities and more are rooted in a common historical thread: the strong grip of society on traditional stereotypes, norms, and beliefs. Confronting this poses the greatest challenge faced in overcoming inequality in its multiple forms, and in executing policies that could reduce them.

Current Pressing Inequalities

Millions of women are unable to enjoy their fundamental rights as humans due to discrimination. Women and girls make up around 60% of chronically hungry people. Out of approximately 790 million illiterate people in the world, more than two-thirds are women and lack of education is even more prevalent in rural areas. Access to leadership and decision-making are even more scarce for them. These existing, deep-rooted inequalities have contributed to an upward trend of violence against women by 25%, and have especially surfaced during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the world, women earn less and were disproportionately affected by job cuts caused by the pandemic and had few protections such as paid sick leave. Women are also at higher risk of infection and health complications brought by the virus as they comprise over 70% of the healthcare worker population, from nurses to pharmacists to physicians, and are more prone to exposure. Gender inequality was founded on the basis of individuals not adhering to socialized traditional male or female standards depending on their sex upon birth. Issues relating to sexual and gender identity, including the inequalities experienced by the LGBTQ+ community, are also part of achieving gender equality. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), data gathering and resource allocation for the LGBTQ+ community are hindered by the failure to respect the right to life of its members, resulting in disproportionate representation on multiple fronts. This includes counts on those experiencing discriminatory homelessness, poverty, unemployment, and lack of healthcare access, especially in light of alarming shortages of antiretrovirals for those living with HIV and the ability of trans individuals to receive hormonal therapy or gender-affirming care.

Migrants, displaced individuals, and refugees are also victims of unequal access to healthcare, education, and employment, and simultaneously become the object of hate and xenophobia. With 27.1 million refugees and a total of 89.3 forcibly displaced individuals around the world as of 2021, displaced migrants and refugees are prompted to flee in part due to immense inequality and maltreatment experienced from the countries they are originally from. Anti-refugee sentiment exacerbates unequal access to receiving necessary health and relocation services, in public transportation and in neighborhoods. This makes it difficult to better adjust to a new environment compounded with the inherent difficulty of forced displacement. For example, according to a 2020 survey taken from over 400 participants who identified as refugees and asylum seekers in Australia, prevalent discrimination was experienced in situations such as searching for employment opportunities, being denied different services, and in being victims of physical violence, resulting in overall feelings of reduced control and less sense of belonging. More recently, refugees from Ukraine, specifically Black and Brown refugees escaping from this and other conflicts around the world, are not treated equally as other refugees. In a condemnation of this discrimination, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) chief Filippo Grandi stated that this is “unacceptable,” and that action is being taken to see that these people are “protected equally.”

Racial inequality remains a prevalent issue in society. While multiple efforts to reduce its effects have been fruitful, many racial minorities still suffer from discrimination and bias on the basis of their racial or ethnic background. One of the ways this takes effect is in multidimensional poverty, which assesses poverty beyond the lack of monetary resources, and instead evaluates the effects of other factors, including race, in one's capability of earning income. In Bolivia, for instance, 44% of the population is comprised of indigenous peoples, but make up over 75% of the nation's multidimensionally impoverished people. Inequality also takes the form of criminal justice disparities, such as in the United States where a report to the United Nations in 2018 determined that Black- and Hispanic-Americans were 5.9 times and 3.1 times more likely to be incarcerated than White Americans, respectively. The report further notes that this is due to urban poverty and heavier policing, of which were accompanied with more lengthy sentences and heavier convictions. Emerging digital technologies also have the capacity to reinforce racial bias across societies as these are greatly influenced by the interests and values of those who use and create them. Fake accounts and personas are created to incite racial division and further racial discrimination in society. Such was observed prior to the Swedish election of 2018, wherein 6% of accounts on Twitter that discussed national politics were identified as bots, of which propagated anti-Islamic sentiment. Lack of internet access, internet shutdowns, and the digital divide also disproportionately affect communities of color and other minority groups in different countries, where communication and access to information and education in an increasingly digital world become more difficult to achieve. These occurrences, and their frequency, only demonstrate the different dimensions of racial inequality that exist around the world.

United Nations Involvement

It is at the heart of the United Nations to address these inequalities head on. With regards to women's rights and gender equality, the Declaration on the Violence Against Women of 1993 recognized the infringement of violence against women on their fundamental rights and called for its eradication amongst member states and the global community. Furthermore, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, otherwise known as UN Women, was created in 2010 and functions to promote women empowerment and establish standards for which countries should follow in order to better achieve gender equality. This UN organization works to see the involvement of women in different fields, from leadership and representation in government to economic decision-making and fair work. In addressing equality for LGBT persons, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has on multiple occasions acknowledged that discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual identity is prohibited, specifically in terms of employment and healthcare. UN Free and Equal, a public information campaign launched in 2013, advocates for fair treatment and equal rights for members of the LGBT community. Dedicated to protecting the rights of refugees, the UN Refugee Agency, also known as the UNHCR, serves refugees and migrants fleeing from different

conflicts in the areas of education, health, and livelihood. Their work is also focused on stateless and forcibly displaced people as caused by crises, to ensure that these groups are not devoid of their basic human rights. Separately, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1965 instituted a framework for putting an end to racism in Member States, on the governmental, national, and local level, through continuous evaluation of laws and policies that may target different racial groups. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination reports to the General Assembly on the adherence of states to the international convention, along with providing solutions for how to confront different inequality issues with regards to race, including creating specific agencies to better resolve racial discrimination on a local scale and promote the interests of indigenous peoples. Multiple conferences have also been held since the establishment of this framework to further address ongoing xenophobia and racial discrimination issues.

Conclusion

Part of empowering affected individuals of inequality and discrimination is by promoting inclusive social and economic changes that leave a positive impact. The groups of individuals affected by different forms of inequality are non-homogenous and oftentimes are intersectional; therefore, other aspects of their individuality must be acknowledged in endeavors to reduce inequality. Eliminating discriminatory laws and unjust practices, instituting change on the governmental level, and bringing attention to the needs of the marginalized are key to reducing inequality on a global scale. Economic goals and growth remain fruitless if they do not reduce poverty and promote inclusivity. It is in light of fighting for individual rights that these issues should be addressed within the Economic and Social Council, all to improve the quality of life and maintain the dignity of humans around the world.

Guiding Questions

- What inequalities are prevalent in the nation you are representing? Are there any historical events that have caused them?
- How has your nation addressed and responded to its most pressing inequalities?
- What groups are targeted by discrimination in the country you are representing? How does inequality take form within these groups?
- What barriers exist in your country that impede on achieving greater equality for different groups of people?

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