



ASIAN MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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ECOSOC

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Respected Delegates of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Please devote a few minutes to read this letter.

First, congratulations on your participation in one of the most respected MUN Conference of the country- ASIAN Model United Nations, which is also one of the largest gatherings of delegates at one platform in India. This year at ASIANMUN 2016, The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) shall discuss-

CURBING GLOBAL POVERTY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Secondly, **UNECOSOC is NOT a tough or boring committee** at all, it just requires proper research, presentable explanations and dedication towards the agenda at hand.

The responsibility of pulling off the show with resounding success rests on your shoulders. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the most demanding committees in any MUN conference. It requires technical knowledge of economics, understanding of functioning of economic institutions and analytic abilities along with, most importantly, interest in Economics.

I would suggest you to take a reading of relevant international instruments like-

- **The United Nations Charter (Chapter IX)** ¹
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** ²
- **IMF Articles of Agreement** ³

¹ <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/ctc/uncharter.pdf>

² <http://www.un-documents.net/icescr.htm>

³ http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/06-gatt.pdf

⁴ <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/aa/index.htm>

Next, know your country's policies, international relations and position on the issues at hand. In this regard, the official website of the country, that of its embassies and permanent mission to the UN can be of great help. Research on the problems well and keep in mind your country's policies. Attempt to go to roots of the problem. Often, problems are structural rather than superficial. Throughout your research, make sure that you keep your research **solution oriented**. In this regard, try to find out what has worked in the past and what hasn't. **And if so, why has it not worked, what were the shortcomings/loopholes and how those can be addressed.**

Also, in a large gathering, it is important to have good convincing skills and lobbying skills. Pre-conference lobbying is also encouraged.

Now to the Background guide. Please read the following guide carefully. It will help you get a background of the situation, but should be treated as exhaustive. Do not limit the scope of your research to the guide. Also do read economic reports by the IMF (IMF World Economic Outlook), World Bank Reports, etc. Follow the links given and pay due attention to underlined texts and read the questions to consider.

While research should be amply voluminous, it is also important to keep your research properly structured and avoid making it look complicated to yourself.

During the course of the committee, be attentive at all times and if possible, take notes of what others say so that you can follow up on the points. It is important to initiate new discussions or bring forth that which is being missed out but it is equally important to attentively follow other's points, contradicting or supplementing them with your knowledge, research and analysis. **Remember a perfect picture can only be sketched by joining the correct dots.**

Also, make use of chits as, due to sheer number of delegates, it might not be possible for you to get desired number of recognitions to speak.

Lastly, feel free to contact us for any query you may have, all the best delegates. **May the Force be with you.**

With Best Wishes,

ARNAV PATNAIK (CHAIRPERSON)

RAM SUBHASH (VICE CHAIRPERSON)

INTRODUCTION

Utilizing Youth Employment for Sustainable Development

Introduction

The total absolute and relative number of young people today is the highest that it has ever been; there are approximately 1.8 billion people currently in the world aged 10-24 years old, which makes up 25% of the global population. In the least developed countries (LDCs), the number increases to 60%, and that number is projected to rise even more by the middle of the century. In the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the current work of the international community, there is increasing attention to helping young people find employment in order to drive economic growth and social stability. However, there are significant and endemic challenges in relation to youth employment that need innovative solutions and multi-stakeholder political will. This urgency in addressing youth employment comes from what is described as the demographic window of opportunity. This issue is highly significant to the mandate of the United Nations (UN), which was founded in the aftermath of World War II to promote international peace and security. Just as importantly, the UN provides a forum and platform for action on sustainable economic, social, and cultural development for all humanity. This is primarily through one of the UN's principal organs, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). By coordinating between different stakeholders, including Member States, private businesses, and civil society organizations (CSOs), ECOSOC has shed light on the many challenges facing youth employment globally, and how targeted economic and social policies may help leverage youth employment for sustainable development.

International and Regional Framework

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), adopted in 1948, was a landmark document that paved the way for the UN system's commitment to rights-based development for all. As early as 1965, the UN recognized the importance of young people's energy and creativity for development in the *Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples*. In it, the UN General Assembly (GA) highlights the "important part being played by young people in every field of human endeavour and the fact that they are destined to guide the fortunes of mankind." The World Commission on Environment and Development issued a report titled *Our Common Future* in 1987, also known as the Brundtland Report. It notably defined sustainable development as: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In 1995, the World Program of Action for Youth (WPAY) to The Year 2000 and Beyond was created. WPAY is comprised of 10 original and five additional priority areas for building national capacities for fostering youth development and participation in society. Employment was the second priority area, following education. WPAY stresses the damage resulting in not utilizing this significant Human resource, both to young people themselves and their Member State, as well. Another important international framework is the SDGs, adopted on 25 September 2015, which are the cornerstones of the UN Member States' collective development agenda for the next 15 years. During the past two years, the GA Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals, in addition to the UN Secretary-General, were instrumental in providing input to formulating the goals. Mindful of past issues with the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) design, there was greater UN engagement with CSOs to include the voice of the poorest and most vulnerable segments of society while creating the SDGs. There are 17 SDGs split into 169 targets, a

significant increase from the 8 MDGs and their 18 targets. Additionally, there is now clearer language regarding youth employment & sustainable development. Goal 8 of the SDGs aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” Targets 5 and 6 of Goal 8 explicitly mention youth employment, first in the context of decent work and equal pay for equal value, then in terms of the proportion of young people not in employment, education, or training. Target 3 of Goal 4 focuses on access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university education to all people. Target 4 of the same goal focuses on the link between the previous and employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth.

Role of the International System

An important organization in relation to this topic is the International Labour Organization (ILO), which was created following World War I. It became the first UN specialized agency in 1946, having a consultative and cooperative relationship with the GA and ECOSOC. Its objectives are to “promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.” It counts youth employment among its key issues, and has a dedicated Youth Employment Program (YEP). The YEP provides valuable assistance to Member States seeking to address youth unemployment through different avenues such as data collection, policy advice, awareness-raising, and strategic partnership. During the ILO’s annual International Labour Conference in 2012, it issued its call for action for youth employment, affirming that creating decent jobs for youth was of the highest global priority. This is because persistent youth unemployment and underemployment (not utilizing skills fully) lead to disillusioned youth, and carry high social and economic costs. Another first was the appointment of Mr. Ahmed El Hendawi by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as the first ever UN Envoy on Youth in 2013. El Hendawi’s role is to advocate for the needs and rights of young people within the UN system. Youth employment is being afforded increased focus within his program of work. As such, he is tasked with working with core UN agencies on promoting it; these include some 40 members of the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. A recent example of this work is his support in organizing the High-Level Event of the GA marking the 20th anniversary of WPAY, to discuss youth in the post-2015 process. In his words, “Youth are proving once again that they have the power and the tools to be equal partners in development. They do not want to be talked at—they want to be engaged in a meaningful way.” ECOSOC is the main UN organ tasked with addressing economic and social questions of sustainable development. It fulfils that via its central role in supervising the work of UN subsidiary and expert bodies, plus UN specialized agencies, in the areas of social, economic, and environmental concerns. ECOSOC’s work follows an annual programmatic cycle, with high-level, integration, humanitarian affairs, and operational activities for development segments. The Council is also a platform to discuss pertinent issues; it fulfils that role for youth via its annual Youth Forum. During the 2014 Forum, over 350 youth representatives called upon governments to provide youth with access to quality education and decent work opportunities. The representatives called attention to the barriers of entry to labour markets caused by skill mismatches and lack of experience, among other issues, with a spotlight on Africa. ECOSOC’s 2015 Integration Segment was titled “Achieving Sustainable Development through Employment Creation and Decent Work for All.” It brought together Member States, ILO constituents, CSOs, and the business sector to address this. The outcomes included policy recommendations for adequate social safety nets, active labour market policies, minimum and living wages, and training and skills development for youth among others. The policies are essential to facilitating the creation of decent jobs, as a way of promoting the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. Another main UN organ, the GA, convened the High-Level Event on the Demographic Dividend and Youth Employment in June 2015. The demographic dividend is when a country’s working-age population is larger than its dependent one. It featured

two panel discussions: the first on how to best leverage the demographic dividend, and the second on policies and measures needed to boost youth employment. Both discussions included themes of health, education, employment, and empowerment. Recommendations included how to hasten the demographic transition, plus how to empower youth to participate in solution-setting and monitoring.

Youth Employment and the Demographic Window of Opportunity

The global youth population is projected to increase until 2070, due to a global aggregate shift from high fertility and mortality rates to low ones. This demographic transition translates to the share of the working-age population (15 to 65 years old) becoming larger than the share of dependents. New labour force entrants are usually more educated than existing workers and more capable of changing jobs. In turn, this improves the overall labour force quality and productivity. Finally, a lower dependency ratio means more money is saved and then re-invested in the economy. East Asian countries have already reaped the benefits of providing family planning resources and investing in their youth; Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 970% between 1950 and 2008. The Republic of Korea's per-capita GDP has grown by an astonishing 2,200% within the same time period. This is what the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has termed the "demographic dividend," and across regions, each Member State has its own demographic window of opportunity. However, the reality is that most Member States have yet to properly exploit their demographic window of opportunity. Unemployed, disaffected youth with no decent job prospects or opportunities for social mobility is a significant factor in fomenting social and political unrest, such as during the Arab Spring protests. Jobs are sources of identity validation, and mark the transition into adulthood. Research suggests that unemployment and other negative experiences of labour markets, such as discriminatory barriers to entry underemployment, monotonous and unsafe working practices, and informal employment, are linked to serious forms of violence. These experiences may drive people into practicing forms of violence that are both financially and socially rewarding for them. This can range from organized crime, to insurgency, to terrorism. Accordingly, there is much that remains to be done by Member States in addressing youth employment.

Current Youth Employment Challenges

In its 2015 "World Employment and Social Outlook," the ILO predicts that global unemployment will continue to rise in the next five years. There are over 201 million unemployed people worldwide. 74 million young people are unemployed; their rate of 13% in 2014 is almost three times higher than older adults. Even within some of the world's richest economies, youth unemployment is still significantly higher than adult unemployment. It is 2.6 times higher in the United States, 1.8 in Japan, 2.3 in Canada, and 3.6 in New Zealand. In East Asia, the average youth unemployment rate was 10.5% in 2014. Within South-East Asia and the Pacific, the youth unemployment rate is more than three times that of the adult one, at 13.6%. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is plagued with the highest youth unemployment rate worldwide, at 29.5%. Additionally, those actually employed do not always enjoy the benefits of working. According to the ILO, nearly 152 million young workers live below the poverty line of \$1.25 per day, almost double the number of the unemployed youth. The working poor, living under \$2 a day, number more than 200 million. Also, within Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, almost half of all young workers work in the informal economy. They lack job stability, different forms of social protection, and are susceptible to unsafe working conditions. Another group faces additional difficulties: young people with disabilities. The UN estimate ranges from 180 to 220 million youth living with disabilities worldwide. The majority of these youth live in poverty and lack access to resources and services, even in developed countries. A large number of children with disabilities do not enjoy access to education, for example. Discriminatory and other barriers

result in youth with disabilities finding the transition into adulthood difficult. People with disabilities suffer from disproportionately high unemployment rates: in some countries in the Asia-Pacific region, that can be as high as 80%. A more traditional sector, agriculture, is also vital for youth employment. This is where young workers face the greatest risk of living in poverty, at a rate more than twice their adult counterparts. But due to a lack of incentives and opportunities for social mobility, youth are increasingly turning their backs on opportunities in agriculture. Working on providing better employment opportunities, plus maximizing the returns on labour-intensive practices, provides two benefits. It helps youth break the often-intergenerational cycle of poverty, and also improves food security.

Nearly six million young people worldwide have given up trying to look for jobs. There are clear effects of youth unemployment on young people, their families, and their countries. Young people who cannot find work may suffer from low self-esteem, and may engage in negative behaviours, such as criminal behaviour or unsafe sexual activity. Households have less disposable income and a greater burden of care, increasing the risk that they fall or stay in poverty. Finally, this increases national poverty, lowers public health, lessens tax revenue and indeed increases the cost of policies to deal with the ill effects of youth unemployment, such as policing crime, income welfare and other social security programs. Investing in promoting youth employment creates sustainable development across all areas of society. ECOSOC's Integration Segment has focused on linking good quality jobs with sustainable development. It has highlighted the importance of raising the wages of the working poor, which live on less than \$2 a day and form up to 27% of the global labour force.

Economic Policy Approaches

In addition to global macroeconomic uncertainty, there are structural reasons why youth unemployment rates are not the same as their adult counterparts; chiefly, there are labour market supply-demand mismatches. Young people's skills and education are simply not what firms require. Youth can also be overqualified in terms of education, so they may not be willing to work in underwhelming jobs. This skills mismatch is exemplified in the case of China. Nine percent of recent college graduates are unemployed, double the general population rate. Businesses have exploited this vulnerability, offering little compensation to desperate job applicants. This can have long-term effects in the shape of brain drain, as disinvested, skilled, youth migrate to seek better opportunities outside their communities and countries. The World Bank estimates that some countries have lost up to one-third of their skilled workforce.

By supporting stronger aggregate demand and improving access to financial services, Member States help young people find decent work, foster space for entrepreneurship, and boost investment generally. There must be public investment in labour-intensive, large-scale infrastructure to absorb the supply of eager young workers. Employee-guarantee schemes and wage subsidies must also be considered where appropriate. In addition, tripartite wage setting mechanisms that involve government, labour, and private business promote better pay. ECOSOC has focused on several economic policy areas for implementation on the national level. It is encouraging Member States in providing adequate social protection systems for all members of society, as per ILO recommendations. It is also helping them introduce and improve policies aimed at increasing youth and other vulnerable groups' employability, and access to decent work opportunities. This is via active labour market support and public-private partnerships, and facilitating access to labour markets. Finally, it has called for a strengthening of the capacity of national financial institutions to provide access to banking and insurance services to those who previously could not. This includes credit and microfinance services.

Leveraging Youth Employment for Sustainable Development

Literacy and education are also important in approaching youth employment; there are currently 130 million young people, aged 15 to 24 years old, without basic reading, writing, and numeracy skills. From the onset of the educational cycle, policies must ensure that all have access to quality education. Social protection and incentives are important in ensuring that poor children stay in school. Currently, most of the education for children with disabilities is substandard compared to mainstream education, and subject to teachers' misconceptions on what is appropriate for their students with disabilities. Overall, those who have not enjoyed access to education, particularly young women and girls, should be targeted in second-chance initiatives that deliver basic knowledge and train essential competencies. These can include non-traditional trainings within non-formal settings. In turn, these alternative forms of education should be recognized by the private sector. Secondary and higher education, plus vocational training, must be geared towards meeting current and future business demands. Adding to that, school-to-work transition and training programs are a tried and tested method to forge public-private partnerships that ultimately leave youth with valuable experience and skills, without compromising on their education. It is crucial that apprenticeships and internships do not become vehicles of exploitation of youth labour. An investment in educating and training young people raises an economy's social capital. The measurable economic return in developing countries amounts to \$15 to every \$1 spent on education. ECOSOC has recognized the need to promote investment, public and private, in human capital via education and resource capacity building. ECOSOC's 2015 Integration Segment highlighted several innovative cases of doing so, including in Turkey, Finland, and Cambodia. There are several promising sectors for boosting youth employment, especially in developing countries. This is due to the proliferation of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in many diverse fields. The offshore sector particularly has some interesting side effects; notably, demand for education in the skills needed means that for every direct job created, there are four created indirectly. Thanks to ICTs, the very concept of a "workplace" has changed. The rise in mobile technology use, and new forms of outsourcing such as crowd-sourcing and micro-work, have helped create employment opportunities even for youth with limited skills, and access to basic digital infrastructure. Sustainable development also requires a transition to a smarter and "greener" economy, with fewer adverse effects on the environment. There is a desire amongst some young people to integrate ICT solutions within the green economy. It has been estimated that, over the next two decades, this could lead to creating 15 to 60 million jobs. ECOSOC has also recognized the potential of ICT in improving quality of life and increasing participation in the global economy. ECOSOC's secretariat includes those with the UN ICT Task Force; its role is to link ICT with sustainable development issues.