

The Republic of El Salvador considers addressing the topics “Education in Post Conflict Situations“, “Implementing SDG 7: Ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All“ and “Promoting the Political and Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples in ECOSOC to be a crucial step towards improving the lives of many vulnerable groups and looks forward to the discussions in the Council.

I. Education in Post Conflict Situations

As President Cerén remarked in the 72nd Session of General Assembly (GA), having endured almost 12 years of armed conflict, El Salvador is a country that is especially cognisant of the need for strategies that contribute towards a peaceful civil society. Investments in the education of young people are not only an important contribution towards employment but also a crucial component of establishing cultural values of peace and reconciliation. As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), El Salvador considers the strengthening of public education institutions as crucial in sustaining peace in post conflict situations and preventing future escalations of violence.

When addressing the Security Council in its 8241st meeting, Permanent Representative Hasbún noted the commitment of El Salvador to resolution 2250 (2015), which stresses the need for the participation of young people in political decision-making processes. Opening governing practices to be more inclusive of young people necessitates inclusive knowledge-providing institutions that enable the younger generation to actively shape the peaceful futures of their countries. In collaboration with CELAC (The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), representatives of El Salvador have supported the promotion of the rights of children and adolescents as a vital step towards building a stable civil society. To strengthen youth engagement, the ECOSOC Commission for Social Development should draft policy recommendations based on the 2019 ECOSOC Youth Forum, and highlight the perspectives of those who are currently facing the struggles of learning in unstable post conflict situations.

El Salvador reaffirms the findings of the “Progress Study on Youth, Peace, and Security” (2018), mandated by resolution 2250 (2015), in stressing that educated young people are a key group in maintaining peace but also contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustained growth requires education systems that provide students with relevant skills and capabilities that enable them to successfully enter the job market. El Salvador is in alignment with the “Group of 77” in aiming to eradicate poverty through a holistic approach, which is especially important in post-conflict situations, in which poverty may prolong violent conflicts.

There is still some discrepancy between these goals and the successful policy implementations that are necessary for achieving them. To explore solutions to financing issues, ECOSOC should strive towards a policy that prioritises a fairly balanced burden of responsibility for the resources needed to further education in post-conflict situations between developed and developing nations. The ECOSOC Committee of Development should, therefore, consider drafting policy recommendation towards reserving a certain percentage of aid to go towards education. Furthermore, El Salvador has greatly expanded the quality of primary education through researching data on the 400 lowest-performing schools in the country. This model could be reproduced on a broader scale to learn about the most urgent improvements to local educational facilities that need to be made. Furthermore, ECOSOC would contribute greatly to future policy discussions on this topic by initiating a report on the status of education in current post-conflict situations, which may give more insight on where funds and knowledge resources are chiefly needed.

II. Implementing SDG 7: Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All

In recent history, great improvements have been made in providing broadly accessible energy around the globe, with 87% of the global population currently having access to electricity (The Energy Progress Report, 2019). El Salvador has been chiefly among those Member States that have rapidly increased the accessibility of electricity to its population. Through improving infrastructure in rural areas, 99% of El Salvador’s population now has access to electricity, a significant increase in comparison to the 87% of a decade ago (The Energy Progress Report, 2019).

Although El Salvador welcomes the local and global advancements in access to energy, it is also a country that is vulnerable to intense suffering due to climate change causing environmental damage, e.g. because of extensive drought. As President Cerén remarked in the 72nd Session of General Assembly (GA), El Salvador contributes only minimally to pollution, yet it suffers from the lack of implementation of environmental policies by the other Member States. Therefore, El Salvador calls on

ECOSOC to further report on the implementation of renewable energy sources with respect to target 7.2 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is founded on General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 2015.

There is an international consensus regarding the importance of balancing the pursuit of accessible energy with the goal to protect the environment, as seen at the Global SDG 7 Conference in 2018. However, a fair distribution of the financial burden is necessary that achieving these goals. El Salvador has already notified the United Nations in the 72nd GA that it is spending half of its budget on policies and programs aimed at achieving 2030 goals and implores the other Member States to show similar commitment to the Development Agenda. For developing countries, providing sustainable energy is intrinsically linked to development assistance, and El Salvador is in agreement with CELAC that Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a crucial factor in supporting the fulfilment of renewable energy goals. Therefore, El Salvador implores developed nations to fully implement target 17.2 of the SDGs of spending 0.7 percent of gross national income for official development assistance.

El Salvador advocates ECOSOC to contribute to the effective allocation of development assistance through defining adequate criteria that reflect on a country's level of development in the energy sector. Regarding the SDG 7 implementation in Central and Latin American countries, structural transformation towards sustainable energy sources requires cooperation on technological solutions that respond to the trend of increasing non-renewable energy consumption and energy efficiency (The Energy Progress Report, 2019). The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) should examine proposals on shared projects to decrease fossil fuel dependency through subsidies of hydroelectric, solar, wind, thermal and biomass energy and the coordination of research on technological progress. El Salvador is already working towards restoring its ecosystem within a large-scale framework and has proposed an initiative for a "2020-2030 United Nations Decade for Ecosystems". It urges the international community to support in order to address developmental challenges on national and international levels.

III. Promoting the Political, Socioeconomic, and Cultural Rights of Indigenous Peoples

El Salvador first and foremost reaffirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples as stated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), the most fundamental ones being self-determination, autonomy and freedom from discrimination. The Constitution of El Salvador recognises indigenous people and states its commitment to their cultural and ethnic identities. El Salvador welcomes the UN Year of Indigenous Language and considers the protection of cultural features to be of great importance for the future of indigenous rights protection.

In recent years, the UN has made strides in acknowledging and upholding the rights of indigenous populations, as exemplified by ECOSOC resolution 2018/5 and General Assembly Resolution 72/155. However, El Salvador is aware that many indigenous people worldwide still live in extreme poverty and are not always fully integrated into the societies of the countries they live in. In congruence with resolution 2018/5, El Salvador advocates for a development-oriented approach towards the eradication of poverty and the advancement of the rights of indigenous peoples, both through legal protection and structural transformation.

El Salvador has noted in the 17th Session of ECOSOC (2018) that it recognises the marginalisation of its indigenous groups as part of its history. However, the country is now working on formalising a legal framework that follows a rights-based approach with the goal of protecting and empowering its indigenous population. CELAC and El Salvador consider the strengthening of the economic conditions of indigenous populations crucial in including them in various societal processes, as well as contributing to local communities and the economy as a whole. Especially indigenous women are often excluded from such opportunities. The Commission on the Status of Women should formally recognise this exclusion and advocate for grass-roots projects that empower marginalised indigenous women economically through skill-training and information.

Landownership is another important issue in promoting the socioeconomic rights of indigenous peoples. As a member of the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples, El Salvador recognises the need for direct outreach to indigenous groups to monitor and ensure that states acquire their informed consent when pursuing policies that impact their property. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues should, in its 2019 session, continue the regional dialogues with representatives of indigenous peoples that it engaged in its Seventeenth Session (2018) to reach conclusions on precise projects that can help indigenous communities demand their rights to be respected.

Bibliography:

The Energy Progress Report. (2019). *El Salvador | Tracking SDG7*. [online] Available at: <https://trackingsdg7.esmap.org/country/el-salvador> [Accessed 17 Feb. 2019].