

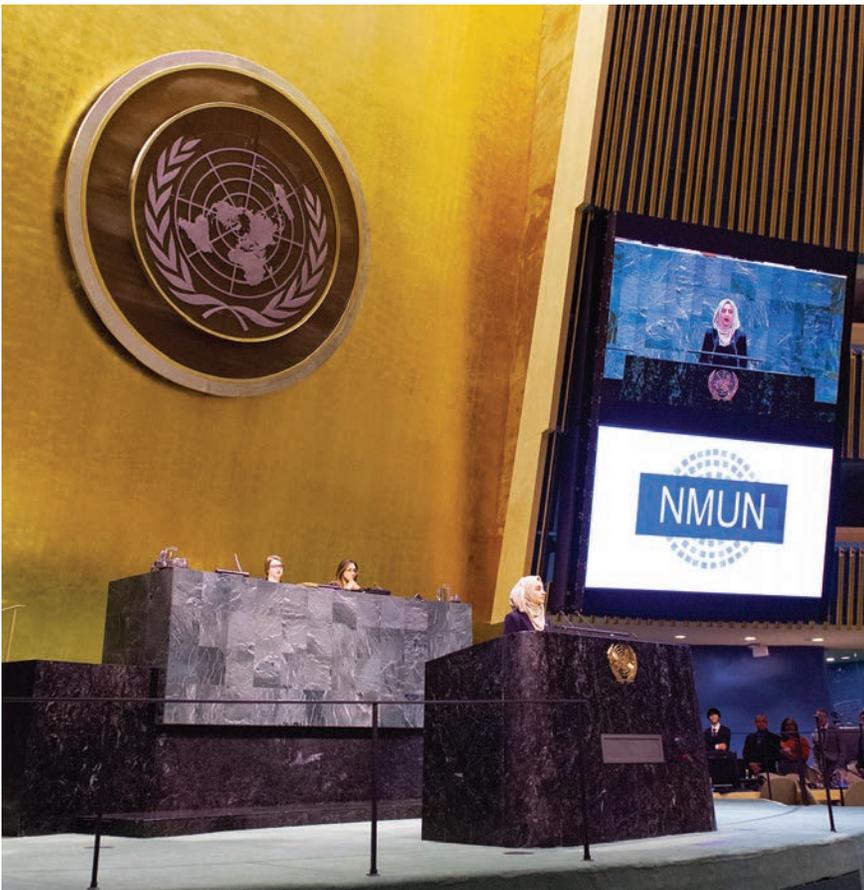


New York City, NY, USA
28 March - 1 April (Conf. A) / 5-9 April (Conf. B)



General Assembly Second Committee Background Guide 2021

Written and updated by: Maike Weitzel and Martin Schunk, Directors
Kenny Van Nguyen, Assistant Director



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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2021 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the General Assembly, Second Committee (GA2). This year's staff is: Directors Maike Weitzel (Conference A) and Martin Schunk (Conference B), and Assistant Director Kenny Van Nguyen (Conference B). Maike has a Bachelor of Arts in European Studies and a Master of Arts in International Relations. Martin recently graduated with a Master of Arts, in Media Culture and Media Economy. From 2019 to 2020, he was a Carlo-Schmid-Fellow at the United Nations Department of Global Communications. Kenny completed his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Communication from the University of Colorado at Boulder and is an AmeriCorps Service Member Alumni. He is currently a staffer to Colorado's Lieutenant Governor Dianne Primavera.

The topics under discussion for the General Assembly Second Committee are:

- I. Financing for Development
- II. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for Sustainable Economic and Financial Development
- III. Disaster Risk Reduction

The General Assembly Second Committee is one of the six Main Committees of the UN General Assembly. As a foundational organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly Second Committee addresses macroeconomic policy pertaining to international trade, debt sustainability, development finance, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Additionally, the Committee discusses development topics such as globalization, interdependence, the eradication of poverty, and the operational activities of the UN system. The General Assembly, Second Committee embraces the inclusion of least-developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS) in its work. In addressing these issues, the Second Committee utilizes recommendations to the General Assembly Plenary, initiates conferences, prepares reports to advance a topic, and requests the Secretary-General to report on significant issues.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2021 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), that serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions are the:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the General Assembly Department, Collin King (Conference A) and Leah Schmidt (Conference B), at usg.ga@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Maike Weitzel, *Director*

Conference B

Martin Schunk, *Director*

Kenny Van Nguyen, *Assistant Director*

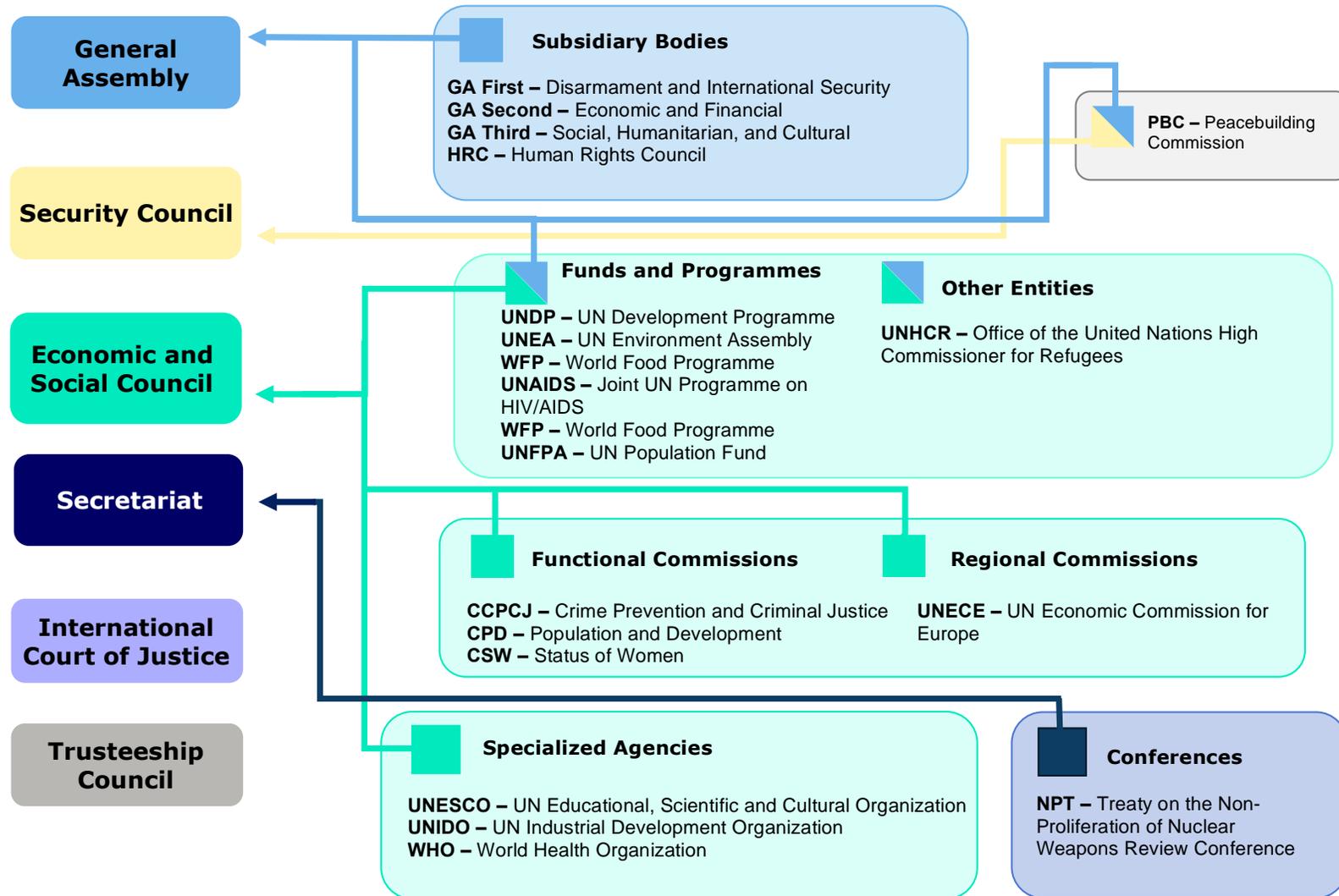


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

“The real danger is not the threat to one’s economy that comes from acting. It is, instead, the risk to one’s economy by failing to act.”¹

Introduction

Article 7 of the *Charter of the United Nations* established the General Assembly as one of the six foundational organs of the United Nations (UN).² The General Assembly is composed of six Main Committees, including the General Assembly Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee).³ The Main Committees share similar arrangements in structure, governance, membership, functions, and powers, but each Committee addresses a specific thematic area.⁴ The Second Committee drafts proposals, prepares recommendations, and reports back to the Main Committee of the General Assembly.⁵

The Second Committee represents the economic and financial aspects of the General Assembly.⁶ It addresses a variety of issues related to financing for development, information and communication technologies (ICTs), macroeconomic policy, globalization and interdependence, as well as the eradication of poverty.⁷ The work of the Second Committee involves other UN development bodies such as, but not limited to, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Trade Organization (WTO); to complete its policy work and to bridge national action and international policies.⁸ For instance, the Second Committee partners with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), through which it gains substantive support and reports on development targets.⁹ Likewise, the Second Committee works in collaboration with the United Nations Development Group and the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination to operationalize and implement development policies and activities.¹⁰ Additionally, to support General Assembly resolution 70/1 on *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015), the Second Committee works to implement the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015) through policy recommendations that address economic growth and development.¹¹

Governance, Structure, and Membership

Chapter IV of the *Charter of the United Nations* regulates its functioning, and empowers the General Assembly and its Main Committees to formulate recommendations that promote international economic and social cooperation.¹² Membership of the General Assembly Second Committee includes all 193 Member States, two observer states, numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other

¹ UN DGC, *Address to the General Assembly by Secretary General Antonio Guterres on 25 September 2018 in New York*, 2018.

² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

³ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2019-2020*, 2020, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

⁷ *Ibid.*; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 71.

⁸ UN General Assembly, *Summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (A/69/83)*, 2014.

⁹ UN DESA, *About UN DESA*, 2019; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 73.

¹⁰ UN ECOSOC, *Office for Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

¹² *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

entities.¹³ Each Member State has a single vote, while Observer States and NGOs can participate in the general debate, but may not vote.¹⁴ The General Assembly seeks to adopt resolutions by consensus, which requires a high level of cooperation among Member States.¹⁵

The General Assembly convenes annually in the third week of September and commences with General Debate and the allocation of agenda items.¹⁶ The 75th session of the UN General Assembly is scheduled to begin on 15 September 2020.¹⁸ The General Committee of the General Assembly allocates the agenda items for each of the Main Committees, which lays out the primary areas for discussion.¹⁷ The President of the General Assembly and 21 Vice-Presidents constitute the General Committee of the General Assembly.¹⁸ For its 75th session, the General Assembly has appointed Volkan Bozkir as its President on 17 June 2020.¹⁹ On 11 June 2020, Mr. Amrit Bahadur Rai of Nepal was elected as Chairperson for the Second Committee during the current session.²⁰ From January to September, the General Committee focuses on thematic debates, consultations, and meetings through organized working groups that discuss specific topics.²¹ The United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Governing councils of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) report about their activities and outcomes to the Second Committee.²² Subsequently, the Second Committee drafts resolutions and reports to the General Assembly based on each report and agenda item that is being considered.²³ The General Assembly Plenary considers these reports and votes whether to adopt the included draft resolutions from the Second Committee.²⁴

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

As part of the General Assembly, Articles 55 to 60 of the *Charter of the United Nations* mandates the Second Committee to promote higher standards of living and employment, and improved conditions of economic and social development.²⁵ The Second Committee has a strong focus on development-related topics such as international trade, poverty eradication, human settlements, globalization, financing for

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Functions and powers of the General Assembly*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Observers*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *List of non-Members States, entities and organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly (A/INF/73/5/Rev.1)*, 2019.

¹⁵ UN General Assembly, *Functions and powers of the General Assembly*, 2020.

¹⁶ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20*, 2020, p. 17.

¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2017; UN General Assembly, *Allocation of agenda items to the Second Committee (A/C.2/73/1)*, 2018; Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, pp. 18-38.

¹⁸ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 17.

¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Election of the 75th president of the General Assembly*, 2020.

²⁰ Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations, *Press Release – Election of Ambassador Rai as Chairman of the Second Committee*, 2020.

²¹ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

²² Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 72; UN DGC, *The United Nations System*, 2019; UN Convention to Combat Desertification, *Rio Conventions Join Forces for Sustainable Development and the Future We Want*, 2012.

²³ Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations, *The PGA Handbook: A practical guide to the United Nations General Assembly*, 2017, p. 72; UN DGC, *The United Nations System*, 2019.

²⁴ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *UN Documentation: General Assembly*, 2019.

²⁵ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020; *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; UNEG, *UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System*, 2014.

development, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.²⁶ To fulfill its mandate, the Second Committee drafts proposals and reports to the General Assembly Plenary on policy recommendations, convenes conferences and summits, and requests the Secretary-General to report on significant issues and host side events.²⁷ Once reports have been discussed and voted on, the General Assembly may make recommendations to Member States through resolutions.²⁸

Due to its special focus on development issues and the 2030 Agenda, the Second Committee observes the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²⁹ To track and monitor progress on the SDGs, the Second Committee requests reports from the Secretary-General.³⁰ For example, in the report to the General Assembly on “Macroeconomic Policy Questions: External Debt Sustainability and Development,” the Second Committee requests the Secretary-General to assess the impact of investment requirements on external debt sustainability in developing states.³¹ Following this report, the General Assembly adopted resolution 73/221 “External Debt Sustainability and Development,” which requests the Secretary-General to analyze the core indicators on external debt sustainability in developing states and invites Member States to take the necessary measures to achieve SDG 17.4.³² Additionally, the Second Committee supports Member States in enacting legislation and implementing policies.³³ For instance, the Second Committee collaborates with the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development and ECOSOC to enact policy recommendations on financing for sustainable development and to implement the 2030 Agenda.³⁴

Additionally, General Assembly resolution 72/313 “Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly,” seeks to improve the working methods and practices of its committees by formulating more concise, action-orientated resolutions and grouping agenda items together thematically.³⁵ As a result, the Second Committee can reduce duplications in the agendas of the Second and Third Committee, ECOSOC and its substantive bodies, and the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).³⁶ Further, the Second Committee may provide directions on special situations including least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), and small island developing states (SIDS).³⁷ Moreover, the Second Committee may make recommendations related to international social and health issues through cultural and social cooperation and the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.³⁸

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly has adopted a silence procedure through decision 74/544 in order to remain operational, whilst no in-person meetings can take place.³⁹ According to the procedure, the president of the General Assembly circulates draft resolutions to Member

²⁶ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Organization of work of the Second Committee: Note by the Secretariat (A/C.2/73/L.1)*, 2019; New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *United Nations Handbook 2019-20, 2020*, p. 23.

²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Functions and powers of the General Assembly*, 2020.

²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

³⁰ Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *Reports of Principal Organs to the General Assembly*, 2019.

³¹ UN General Assembly, *Macroeconomic policy questions: external debt sustainability and development (A/73/536/Add.3)*, 2018.

³² UN General Assembly, *External Debt Sustainability and Development (A/RES/73/221)*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *External Debt Sustainability and Development Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/234)*, 2019.

³³ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

³⁴ UN General Assembly, *Fourth Industrial Revolution Taken Up in Report of Task Force on Financing for Development (GA/EF/3492)*, 2018.

³⁵ UN General Assembly, *Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/72/313)*, 2017.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020; Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, *Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (A/CONF.219/3/Rev.1)*, 2011.

³⁸ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

³⁹ UN News, *UN General Assembly: The world’s ‘town hall’ remains open during COVID-19 crisis*, 2020.

States and gives them a firm 72 hour deadline to object to draft.⁴⁰ If there is no objection, the resolution is adopted and the president will inform the committee.⁴¹ In case of opposition, the president will inform Member States of the objection and refer the objections back to the sponsors and the main committee in question for revision.⁴² This process is repeated until a decision has been made.⁴³

In President Bozkir's first address to the 75th session on 15 September 2020, he highlighted that the 75th anniversary of the UN comes at a time of great challenges for the international community and he emphasized the need for multilateralism and global cooperation.⁴⁴ In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, president Bozkir further announced a special session of the General Assembly on the topic.⁴⁵ In outlining his goals for the upcoming session, president Bozkir included the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the World Summit on Social Development, the preparation of the fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries, as well as a high-level meeting on water-related SDGs.⁴⁶ In his opening remarks, Secretary-General Guterres highlighted that during the 75th session Member States will have to continue to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions, as well as consider the numerous global challenges ahead, making it a very critical year for the UN as a whole.⁴⁷

General Assembly resolution 73/223, "Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development," recalls that financing for sustainable development requires a global financial environment anchored in sustainable, inclusive, and equitable economic growth.⁴⁸ Effectively, the report to the General Assembly highlights the need for further national resource mobilization, partnerships and international cooperation, and investments in data and capacity.⁴⁹ To that end, the General Assembly Second Committee recommends Member States to implement the agreed conclusions of the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development that tackle a variety of issues such as debt sustainability, international trade and cooperation, and domestic and international private business and finance.⁵⁰ In 2020, for the fifth ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up, the Second Committee provided updates on this initiative.⁵¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered financial and economic disruptions, especially in areas that have limited infrastructure and fiscal capabilities.⁵² As part of the UN's comprehensive response to COVID-19, the UN has created a UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund to assist the low and middle income countries in their immediate socio-economic response.⁵³ The Second Committee intends to strengthen multilateral cooperation to maintain and achieve the commitments set forth by the 2030 Agenda by building an inclusive and sustainable economy to help reduce these types of risks in the future.⁵⁴

During the 74th session, the Second Committee highlighted the need for enhanced support for developing nations in order for them to benefit from the positive effects of technology for sustainable development in

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ UN News, *New General Assembly underscores 'necessity of multilateralism'*, 2020.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (A/RES/73/223)*, 2019.

⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development: Report of the Second Committee (A/73/537)*, 2018.

⁵⁰ UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (A/RES/73/223)*, 2019; UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (E/FFDF/2018/3)*, 2018.

⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *2020 ECOSOC Forum on FfD – Final Draft*, 2020.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ UN, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering better*, 2020.

⁵⁴ UN General Assembly, *2020 ECOSOC Forum on FfD – Final Draft*, 2020.

General Assembly resolution 74/229 “Science, technology and innovation for Sustainable Development.”⁵⁵ This point is further stressed in General Assembly resolution 74/228 “Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence” which additionally calls on the Secretary-General to draft a report on this topic and adds it to the agenda of the 75th session.⁵⁶

The Second Committee also acknowledges the increasing importance of the digital economy within the global economy, as well as the need to prioritize the participation of all Member States to develop an inclusive global e-commerce market.⁵⁷ Consequently, the Second Committee urges Member States to implement e-commerce initiatives that provide developing economies access to international trade through electronic exchanges based on internet supply assistance.⁵⁸ Bridging the technology gap within LLDCs and LDCs will help stabilize the communities that are most vulnerable to the disruptive shocks and volatility of the international economy, especially in light of the global pandemic.⁵⁹ Facing low productive capacity, limited market access, and high vulnerability to external shocks, expanding ICT use across Member States is key to attaining the SDGs, especially SDG 1, ending poverty in all its forms everywhere.⁶⁰ During the 74th session, the Second Committee passed resolution 74/197 “Information and communications technologies for sustainable development,” highlighting the potential of modern technology for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, welcoming the formation of new partnerships between public and private organizations, as well as the operationalization of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries.⁶¹

Currently, the UN’s pledge to address the SDGs and climate change has fallen behind the pace necessary to achieve the goals for the decade.⁶² The 2019 SDG Report finds that extreme poverty is still three times higher in rural areas compared with urban areas, women and girls still experience inequality; and global poverty rates are starting to rise after a 28-year reduction.⁶³ With regards to commitments within the *Paris Agreement*, according to the *2019 Emissions Gap Report* issued by UN Environment, there is a commitment gap that must be eliminated, and the current limit set for global temperature far surpasses safe levels.⁶⁴ Emission levels are rising exponentially worldwide, so the amount that governments would need to reduce emissions is also increasing rapidly.⁶⁵ Progress for both the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda have been impacted by the global health crisis, which is leading to disrupted industrial production, financial market volatility, and rising insecurity.⁶⁶ The consequences of the increased volatility in the global financial markets includes higher debt risk and slower economic growth in more vulnerable countries and communities.⁶⁷ In June 2020, the Secretary-General published the report *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives*,

⁵⁵ UN General Assembly, *Science, technology and innovation for Sustainable Development (A/RES/74/229)*, 2020.

⁵⁶ UN General Assembly, *Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (A/RES/73/228)*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth regular session of the General Assembly (A/75/150)*, (2020).

⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for sustainable development (A/RES/73/218)*, 2019.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ UN DGC, *Delegates Call for Multilateralism, Closing Digital Divide to Spur Economic Growth, as Second Committee Debates Globalization, Interdependence (GA/EF/3522)*, 2019.

⁶⁰ UN DGC, *Least Developed Nations Lagging Behind on Attaining Sustainable Development (GA/EF/3504)*, 2018; UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/69)*, 2019.

⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Information and communications technologies for sustainable development (A/RES/74/197)*, 2020.

⁶² UN General Assembly, *Statement by H.E. Tijani Muhammad Bande, President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, 2020.

⁶³ UN Sustainable Development Goals, *Sustainable Development Goals Report*, 2019.

⁶⁴ UN Environment, *Emissions Gap Report 2019*, 2019.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ UN Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report*, 2020.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Protecting Societies, Recovering Better, which summarizes all action taken by the UN thus far, as well as measures to pave the way towards a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, and which was revised in September 2020.⁶⁸ The UN's actions have so far been guided by a three-tier approach: a coordinated global effort to develop a vaccine and treatment that is available and affordable to all, a global humanitarian response plan to address the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, and creating a recovery plan based on the 2030 Agenda.⁶⁹ So far, the Secretary-General has published a series of policy initiatives on specific topics such as marginalized groups, mental health, and economic recovery.⁷⁰ In addition, the General Assembly passed resolution 74/274, "International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19," stressing the need for global cooperation to contain the pandemic and condemning the stockpiling of medical supplies and equipment.⁷¹

Conclusion

The General Assembly Second Committee addresses the international economic and financial priorities of the UN, including those established by the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁷² The Second Committee continues to streamline its work with the overarching goals of improving economic and financial systems worldwide and achieving the SDGs.⁷³ In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, measuring and reporting on the progress made towards achieving the SDGs has been limited due to meeting restrictions.⁷⁴ However, the Second Committee continues to function due to the adopted silence procedures and it seeks to utilize emerging trends and ideas to promote the most effective solutions to address financing for development and attaining the SDGs in an effort to emerge more resilient and sustainably from the pandemic.⁷⁵ The Second Committee will continue to play a pivotal role in advancing efforts to promote sustainable development in the global recovery response to the ongoing pandemic.⁷⁶ The 75th anniversary of the United Nations is marked by a series of unprecedented global challenges that require Member States to enhance multilateral cooperation in order to overcome them.⁷⁷

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The United Nations (UN) Handbook provides a comprehensive look at the UN and its principal organs and committees. Delegates can find a detailed explanation of the structure, processes, and procedures of the Main Committees of the General Assembly in this source. The breakdown of the structure, membership, and functionality of these committees is a useful point for delegates to begin their research and gain an overall understanding of where the committee falls within the UN framework. In particular, the detailed listing of all current membership and leadership of key committees, as well as

⁶⁸ UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*, June 2020; United Nations, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better* September 2020.

⁶⁹ UN Secretary-General, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*, 2020, p.2.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁷¹ UN General Assembly, *International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 (A/RES/74/274)*, 2020.

⁷² UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015; UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

⁷³ *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945; UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

⁷⁴ UN General Assembly, *2020 ECOSOC Forum on FfD – Final Draft*, 2020.

⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*

⁷⁷ UN News, *New General Assembly underscores 'necessity of multilateralism'*, 2020.

the structure and reporting of subsidiary organs will be a useful starting point for understanding the complicated framework of UN action.

United Nations. (2020). *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from:

<https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-to-covid-19.pdf>

This report gives an overview over the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on Member States and the efforts made to contain the crisis. The report further provides a roadmap with steps necessary in order for the global community to recover from the pandemic. Delegates should read the report in order to get a better overview over the UNs actions and to get a better understanding of the socio-economic impact and its long-lasting effects.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *Provisional agenda of the seventy-fifth regular session of the General Assembly (A/75/150)*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from:

<http://undocs.org/en/A/75/150>

This document includes the proposed agenda items to be covered in the Seventy-fifth session of the plenary meeting and six committees of the General Assembly. It breaks down the priorities by topic, as well as the topics and subtopics of each agenda item. Delegates can use this resource to fully understand the different priorities of each committee, the specific priorities and current agenda items, and see the General Assemblies efforts towards revitalization at work.

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I. Financing for Development

“The COVID-19 pandemic, and the global recession it has triggered, are [...] causing immense human suffering around the world. Unless we act now, we could face years of depressed and disrupted economic growth.”⁷⁸

Introduction

Financing for Development (FfD) is defined by the United Nations (UN) as “[m]obilizing and increasing the effective use of financial resources and achieving the national and international economic conditions needed to fulfil internationally agreed development goals.”⁷⁹ From 2000-2015, the development goals of the FfD process were defined by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in 2015 they were replaced by the current paradigm, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were established by the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) in 2015.⁸⁰

Three important tools the UN utilizes to finance the SDGs are “Official Development Assistance” (ODA), “Foreign Direct Investment” (FDI), and “debt financing.”⁸¹ ODA is defined as “government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries.”⁸² A typical example of ODA is the funding of development programming through a bilateral channel, such as a governmental aid agency, or through a multilateral channel, such as UN agencies or multilateral development banks (MDBs).⁸³ FDI describes a “category of cross-border investment in which an investor resident in one economy establishes a lasting interest in and a significant degree of influence over an enterprise resident in another economy.”⁸⁴ A typical example of FDI is an investor from one country purchasing shares of a company from another country.⁸⁵ “Debt financing” in the context of the 2030 Agenda refers to governments borrowing money from creditors to fund sustainable development.⁸⁶ In many cases, this takes the form of external debt, meaning borrowing from creditors outside of a country’s domestic capital market, juxtaposed against domestic debt.⁸⁷

The current UN FfD framework, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015), functions as the financial and economic backbone of the 2030 Agenda, and supports its full implementation.⁸⁸ However, the *Financing for Development Report 2020* (2020) by the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (IATF) warns that the current COVID-19 pandemic is thwarting the already slow progress towards the SDGs even further.⁸⁹ As such, while most countries are having to redirect budget allocations to fight the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the economic impact of the pandemic will likely halt any growth opportunities for developed and developing economies, leading to declining ODA and FDI, and ultimately

⁷⁸ UN Secretary-General, *Secretary-General’s remarks at Roundtable on Sustainable Development [as delivered]*, 2020.

⁷⁹ UN ICFD, *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2002, p. 5.

⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015.

⁸¹ OECD, *Official Development Assistance (ODA): What is ODA?*, 2020, p. 1; OECD, *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)*, 2020; UN IATF, *Debt and debt sustainability*, 2020.

⁸² OECD, *Official Development Assistance (ODA): What is ODA?*, 2020, p. 1.

⁸³ OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 12.

⁸⁴ OECD, *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)*, 2020.

⁸⁵ OECD, *FDI flows*, 2020.

⁸⁶ UN IATF, *Debt and debt sustainability*, 2020.

⁸⁷ ECB, *External Debt Statistics (EDS)*, 2020.

⁸⁸ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, pp. 10-11; UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, pp. 1-2, 7.

⁸⁹ UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. xvii.

require many governments to take up additional debt.⁹⁰ As the international community recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to regain progress to the SDGs by investing in sustainable development and climate action to prevent other crises and new pandemics from the onset.⁹¹

International and Regional Framework

While the first proposal for an international conference on FfD was made in 1991, it was not until 1998 that the General Assembly in resolution 52/179 on “Global partnership for development: high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development” eventually decided to actually convene a conference on FfD in the new millennium.⁹² This led to the first International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002 and its outcome document, the *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development* (Monterrey Consensus) (2002).⁹³ The goal of this conference was to advance economic and financial policy action on an international, national, and regional level in order to ensure development for all.⁹⁴ The Monterrey Consensus sought to mobilize financial resources for the achievement of the MDGs.⁹⁵ The Monterrey Consensus was subsequently followed by the Second International Conference on Financing for Development, which took place in Doha, Qatar, and saw the adoption of the *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development* (Doha Declaration).⁹⁶ While the Doha Declaration largely reaffirmed the commitments of the Monterrey Consensus, it also highlighted additional challenges to the FfD process, such as the increasing need for financing climate action, volatile commodity prices, and providing assistance to post-conflict countries.⁹⁷ In addition, the Doha Declaration established another follow-up accountability process for FfD, which culminated in the AAAA in 2015.⁹⁸

The AAAA represents the most recent framework of the FfD process.⁹⁹ Adopted against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda, the AAAA identified several cross-cutting issues that link the FfD process to sustainable development.¹⁰⁰ These issues range from “delivering social protection and essential public services for all” to “promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.”¹⁰¹ For this purpose, the AAAA highlights seven action areas pertaining to sustainable development: domestic resources, private businesses and finance, international development cooperation, international trade, debt and debt sustainability, systemic issues, and science, technology, innovation, and capacity building.¹⁰²

⁹⁰ UNSDG, *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*, 2020, p. 8; OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 16; UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020.

⁹¹ UNSDG, *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*, 2020, p. 23.

⁹² UN General Assembly, *International conference on the financing of development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/47/575)*, 1992, p. 2; UN ECOSOC, *Resolutions and Decisions of the Economic and Social Council: Second regular session of 1991 (E/1991/91/Add.1)*, 1991, p. 45; UN General Assembly, *Convening of an international conference on the financing of development (A/RES/46/205)*, 1991; UN General Assembly, *Global partnership for development: high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development (A/RES/52/179)*, 1998.

⁹³ UN ICFD, *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2002.

⁹⁴ IMF, *Financing for Development: Revisiting the Monterrey Consensus*, 2015, p. 7.

⁹⁵ UN ICFD, *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2002, p. 5.

⁹⁶ UN General Assembly, *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (A/RES/63/239)*, 2008.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

⁹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 7-35.

Following the adoption of the AAAA, the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda with resolution 70/1 (2015), which contains 17 SDGs and stresses the importance of the FfD process for its implementation.¹⁰³ The aim of the SDGs was to provide a concrete, targeted plan for the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of global sustainable development.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, several cross-cutting issues that are based on the SDGs underpin the AAAA action areas, including gender equality, zero hunger, and social protection among others.¹⁰⁵

In addition to the 2030 Agenda, the *Paris Agreement* (2015) and the *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (2015) also continue to inform the FfD process.¹⁰⁶ The *Paris Agreement* highlights the importance of mobilizing climate finance for the realization of the climate action objectives, which are intrinsically linked to sustainable development.¹⁰⁷ The agreement further draws particular attention to the role developed countries play in mobilizing financial resources for climate action.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, the Sendai Framework aims to facilitate public and private investments in disaster risk reduction on a national and international level.¹⁰⁹ As such, the FfD framework seeks to work towards financing and implementing disaster risk management, compatible with the Sendai Framework.¹¹⁰

Role of the International System

The General Assembly Second Committee functions as one of the main bodies to ensure the accountability of FfD.¹¹¹ It regularly reviews the current progress on FfD and makes recommendations to the plenary session of the General Assembly on the adoption of relevant resolutions, most notably its resolutions on the “Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development.”¹¹² Furthermore, the Second Committee deals with additional topics pertaining to the FfD process as part of its agenda item “Macroeconomic policy questions,” including examples such as addressing the connection between “International trade and development” in General Assembly resolution 74/201 (2019) or the connection between the “International financial system and development” in General Assembly resolution 74/202 (2019).¹¹³ In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Assembly adopted its resolution 74/270 in April 2020 on the “Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19),” in which the General Assembly recognizes “that the impact of the crisis will reverse hard-won development gains and hamper progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.”¹¹⁴

The General Assembly also holds the quadrennial High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development.¹¹⁵ The AAAA established that the High-level Dialogue be held after the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) under the auspices of the General Assembly, which is only held every

¹⁰³ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ UN IATF, *Cross-cutting issues*, 2020.

¹⁰⁶ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015; COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, art. 9.

¹⁰⁹ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015, pp. 14-16.

¹¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 11.

¹¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)*, 2020.

¹¹² UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (A/RES/74/207)*, 2019.

¹¹³ UN General Assembly, *International trade and development (A/RES/74/201)*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *International financial system and development (A/RES/74/202)*, 2019.

¹¹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) (A/RES/74/270)*, 2020, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ UN DESA, *High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development: Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2020.

four years and is colloquially referred to as the “SDG Summit.”¹¹⁶ The most recent High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development took place in September 2019 and was the first High-level Dialogue since the adoption of the AAAA and the 2030 Agenda in 2015.¹¹⁷ It focused on the financing gap of the SDGs and the mobilization of financial resources for climate action, which thematically links the High-Level Dialogue to the Climate Summit, which also occurred during the High-level Week of the General Assembly’s 74th session.¹¹⁸ In the political declaration of the 2019 SDG Summit, Member States reaffirmed their commitment to mobilizing “adequate and well-directed” financial resources.¹¹⁹

Similar to the General Assembly, ECOSOC also regularly discusses FfD as part of its annual Forum on Financing for Development follow-up.¹²⁰ The most recent Forum on Financing for Development follow-up was held in April and June 2020 as a series of informal online events in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²¹ In the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations of the 2020 Forum, ECOSOC highlighted the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, including the increasing numbers of countries exposed to debt vulnerabilities and the need for more ODA to least-developed countries (LDCs).¹²²

Within the Secretariat of the UN, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and its Financing for Sustainable Development Office (FSDO) support the FfD process.¹²³ FSDO functions as a focal point within the FfD process and coordinates intergovernmental and UN efforts towards achieving sustainable development.¹²⁴ FSDO also provides policy analyses and recommendations on actions within the FfD process to both, Member States and the Secretary-General.¹²⁵ Convened by Secretary-General as per the AAAA, IATF functions as the main coordinating mechanism within the wider UN system for the FfD follow-up process.¹²⁶ IATF provides annual reports about the current developments on FfD and the implementation of the AAAA, with the most recent report being the *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020* (2020).¹²⁷ While FSDO is the substantive lead of IATF’s work, other UN bodies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, such as the World Bank Group (WBG), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), provide substantive input to IATF’s reports.¹²⁸

In addition to the work of DESA, FSDO and IATF, the Secretary-General put forward the *Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in July 2019.¹²⁹ This roadmap, together with the Secretary-General’s *Strategy for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* from September 2018, seeks to better focus the UN’s work on the areas of action contained within the

¹¹⁶ UN ICFD, *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2002, p. 22; UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)* (A/RES/69/313), 2015, p. 37.

¹¹⁷ UN DESA, *High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development: Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2020.

¹¹⁸ UN DESA, *Preliminary Programme for the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development*, 2019.

¹¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Political declaration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the General Assembly* (A/RES/74/4), 2019, p. 5.

¹²⁰ NGO Committee on Financing for Development, *An Introductory Guide to Financing for Development*, 2018, p. 13.

¹²¹ UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up* (E/FFDF/2020/3), 2020, p. 5.

¹²² UN ECOSOC, *Report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up* (E/FFDF/2020/3), 2020, pp. 1-4.

¹²³ UN DESA, *Financing for Sustainable Development Office*, 2020.

¹²⁴ U Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ UN IATF, *About the IATF*, 2020.

¹²⁷ Ibid.; UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020*, 2020.

¹²⁸ UN IATF, *About the IATF*, 2020; UN IATF, *Inter-agency Task Force members*, 2020.

¹²⁹ UN Secretary-General, *Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

AAAA.¹³⁰ As part of this action area, the Secretary-General created the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance in October 2019 as a coalition of private sector leaders to accelerate sustainable investment and align private sector operations with the 2030 Agenda.¹³¹ In July 2020, GISD presented a comprehensive report, addressing predominantly the European Commission, that contains recommendations for both the public and private sector to provide a framework for sustainable investment and finance, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³² Additionally, in February 2020, the Secretary-General appointed Mahmoud Mohieldin as the Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹³³ The Special Envoy will coordinate the mobilization of financial resources for sustainable development between the UN system, the private sector and Member States.¹³⁴ As such, the Special Envoy will help implement the Secretary-General's *Strategy for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.¹³⁵

International financial institutions (IFIs) and MDBs as well as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also take up central roles within the FfD process.¹³⁶ IFIs and MDBs are responsible for the mobilization of public financial resources, provide for financing of projects that are relevant to sustainable development yet are not economically feasible, and have to a large extent already adopted strategies that are in line with the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA.¹³⁷ In contrast to IFIs and MDBs, OECD works primarily as a policy-setting international organization.¹³⁸ In this context, OECD is at the core of collecting data on FfD and providing concrete policy recommendation to its Member States.¹³⁹ Within the OECD system, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is responsible for setting policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.¹⁴⁰

Additionally, civil society organizations (CSOs), most notably non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide development programming, are also important actors in the implementation of the FfD process, as DAC countries of OECD often allocate their ODA either to or through CSOs.¹⁴¹ Many CSOs united their efforts in the Civil Society Financing for Development Group, which, through its Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group, represents civil society concerns within the FfD follow-up process.¹⁴² Similarly, the NGO Committee on Financing for Development, as a member of the Addis Ababa CSO Coordination Group, advocates for mobilizing financial resources for sustainable development and empowering developing countries to take part in the FfD process.¹⁴³

Mobilizing External Financial Resources for Sustainable Development

Official Development Assistance

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

¹³¹ UN DESA, *GISD: Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance*.

¹³² GISD, *Renewed, Recharged and Reinforced: Urgent Actions to Harmonize and Scale Sustainable Finance*, 2020, p. 2.

¹³³ UN DGC, *Secretary-General Appoints Mahmoud Mohieldin of Egypt as Special Envoy on Financing 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SG/A/1944)*, 2020.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ UN General Assembly, *International financial system and development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/168)*, 2019, pp. 15-17; OECD, *Financing for sustainable development*, 2020.

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 15-17.

¹³⁸ OECD, *Who We Are*, 2020.

¹³⁹ OECD, *Financing for sustainable development*, 2020.

¹⁴⁰ OECD, *Development Assistance Committee (DAC)*, 2020.

¹⁴¹ OECD, *Aid for Civil Society Organisations: Statistics based on DAC Members' reporting to the Creditor Reporting System database (CRS), 2016-2017*, 2019, pp. 1-4.

¹⁴² Civil Society Financing for Development Group, *About*, 2020.

¹⁴³ NGO Committee on Financing for Development, *NGO Committee on Financing for Development*, 2018.

ODA remains one of the key drivers of financing the 2030 Agenda.¹⁴⁴ Most of international ODA is provided for by DAC countries of the OECD and has increased over the past decade.¹⁴⁵ While ODA by DAC countries fell in 2018 by 4.3% to \$153 billion, it slightly rose again in 2019 by 1.9% after adjusting for inflation to \$155 billion.¹⁴⁶ This is largely due to an increase in ODA of 2.6% to LDCs and specifically 1.3% to African countries.¹⁴⁷ Yet, with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and the associated economic shocks, in mid-2020 the OECD projected that a strong political will by DAC countries is necessary in order to ensure that ODA is at least maintained at its 2019 level.¹⁴⁸ This is particularly important since ODA is key to building and reinforcing health and social protection systems of developing countries, thereby helping react to the pandemic.¹⁴⁹ Should governments struggle to allocate adequate funds to its ODA budget as a result of the pandemic, OECD projections indicate that ODA could fall by up to \$14 billion in 2020.¹⁵⁰ In turn, this decrease could adversely affect the support that health and protection systems in developing countries receive through ODA.¹⁵¹ As of April 2020, DAC countries have expressed their political will for maintaining ODA at its 2019 level, which will culminate in the DAC High Level Meeting set for later part of 2020.¹⁵²

Additionally, in 1970, the General Assembly established in resolution 2626 (XXV) that developed countries should aim to provide at least 0.7% of their gross national incomes (GNI) as ODA to developing countries by 1975.¹⁵³ This target of ODA inflows will help developing countries achieve economic growth and was repeatedly reaffirmed by the international community in the *Monterrey Consensus*, the *Doha Declaration*, and the AAAA, and it is also reflected in SDG target 17.2 (Partnerships for the Goals).¹⁵⁴ Yet, in 2019, only 5 out of 28 DAC countries of OECD have reached the target of 0.7% of their GNI as ODA.¹⁵⁵ This demonstrates the mismatch between commitments made by the international community, and the actual delivery of ODA to financing sustainable development in developing countries in order to promote their economic growth.¹⁵⁶

Foreign Direct Investment

Compared to portfolio investments and cross-border bank loans, FDI represents the largest and most stable portion of private capital flows for developing countries.¹⁵⁷ FDI can foster economic benefits for

¹⁴⁴ UN IATF, *Official Development Assistance*, 2020.

¹⁴⁵ OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 82; UN IATF, *Official Development Assistance*, 2020; OECD, *Aid by DAC members increases in 2019 with more aid to the poorest countries*, 2020, p. 8.

¹⁴⁷ UN IATF, *Official Development Assistance*, 2020.

¹⁴⁸ OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 16.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁵² UN DESA, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*, 2020, p. 58; OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 18.

¹⁵³ UN General Assembly, *International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (A/RES/2626(XXV))*, 1970, p. 43.

¹⁵⁴ OECD, *The 0.7% ODA/GNI target – a history*, 2020; International Conference on Financing for Development, *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, 2002, p. 14; UN General Assembly, *Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: outcome document of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus (A/RES/63/239)*, 2008, p. 12; UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 17; UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, 2015, p. 26.

¹⁵⁵ OECD, *Aid by DAC members increases in 2019 with more aid to the poorest countries*, 2020, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 9.

¹⁵⁷ UN IATF, *Domestic and international private business and finance*, 2020.

developing countries by generating employment, building productive capacity, and enabling the transfer of technical expertise.¹⁵⁸ Yet since 2015, global FDI inflows, the FDI flows into a country, have decreased from \$2 trillion in 2015 to \$1.5 trillion in 2019.¹⁵⁹ With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting the global economy, FDI inflows are projected to decrease by up to 40% compared to the 2019 numbers.¹⁶⁰ By 2021, FDI inflows are even projected to drop by another 10%, bringing the global FDI inflows well below the \$1 trillion mark.¹⁶¹ In particular, developing countries and countries with transitional economies could be hit the hardest by the decline in FDI inflows, amounting to potential drop of up to 45% in FDI inflows to developing and transitional economies in 2020.¹⁶²

More generally, there are also several problems associated with FDI, such as the inequality in FDI inflows among developing countries and the misuse of FDI for unsustainable development, as well as overly rigid investment policies, which negatively impact FDI or do not even allow for FDI.¹⁶³ In addition, private investments in sustainable infrastructure remain unchanged despite the many initiatives attempting to facilitate more private investment in sustainable infrastructure.¹⁶⁴ This is mainly due to infrastructure projects, especially within the renewable energy sector, not yet being profitable enough.¹⁶⁵

Blended Finance

One approach to ensuring profitability of sustainable infrastructure projects is blended finance, particularly in a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is drying up ODA and FDI for development.¹⁶⁶ Blended finance is defined as the use of ODA or other means of public development finance to leverage additional private financial resources, including FDI, for sustainable development in developing countries.¹⁶⁷ The AAAA first set up the principles on blended finance, which include sharing risks and benefits fairly among project partners, establishing transparent accountability measures, and complying with the social and environmental standards.¹⁶⁸ These principles are complemented by the OECD DAC “Blended Finance Principles” which include, among others, the prioritization of local development needs.¹⁶⁹ One example of blended finance is the Managed Co-Lending Portfolio Program (MCP) of WBG’s International Finance Corporation (IFC), which allows sovereign investors to direct capital towards a syndicated loan portfolio that is managed by IFC.¹⁷⁰ In turn, IFC uses that capital to provide increased financial resources in the form of loans to fund sustainable development in the private sector.¹⁷¹

Debt Sustainability and Debt Relief

Debt Financing for Development

Debt financing can be an effective tool to invest in sustainable development.¹⁷² This is especially the case when a country does not yet have the domestic or external financial resources necessary to invest.¹⁷³ If

¹⁵⁸ UN IATF, *Domestic and international private business and finance*, 2020.

¹⁵⁹ UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2020*, 2020, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁶³ UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 60; UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2020*, 2020, pp. 88-96.

¹⁶⁴ UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 63.

¹⁶⁵ Griffith-Jones & Leistner, *Mobilising Capital for Sustainable Infrastructure: The Cases of the AIIB and the NDB*, 2019, p. 2.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.; LINC, *COVID-19 and Blended Finance: Five Ways to Adaptively Respond*, 2020.

¹⁶⁷ OECD, *OECD DAC Blended Finance Principles for Unlocking Commercial Finance for the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, pp. 15-16.

¹⁶⁹ OECD, *OECD DAC Blended Finance Principles for Unlocking Commercial Finance for the Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018, p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ IFC, *Managed Co-Lending Portfolio Program (MCP)*, 2020.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² WBG, *Debt*, 2020.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

public debt, sometimes also referred to as sovereign debt, is too high, a country is exposed to debt vulnerabilities, which limit private investments, government spending on social protection, and a government's ability to initiate fiscal reforms.¹⁷⁴ These debt vulnerabilities increase the risk of debt distress of a country, which refers to a government's inability to repay its debt.¹⁷⁵ Over the past five years, the percentage of low-income developing countries, which are either at high risk of debt distress or already in debt distress, has drastically increased from 22% in 2015 to 44% in 2019.¹⁷⁶ This means that more countries will lack fiscal resources to finance sustainable development.¹⁷⁷ The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on global growth will likely exacerbate this trend.¹⁷⁸

Debt Sustainability

In order to avoid the risk of debt distress and reduce debt vulnerabilities, the AAAA highlights that debt sustainability is essential.¹⁷⁹ In this context, IATF defines debt sustainability "as the set of policies that allow a country to achieve the [SDGs] and to reach 2030 without an increase in debt ratios."¹⁸⁰ Such policies on debt sustainability include "fostering debt financing, debt relief, debt restructuring and sound debt management."¹⁸¹ However, a IATF analysis on "Achieving the SDGs at current public-debt burdens" shows that low-income countries require an additional 22% of their annual GDP in yearly spending in order to achieve the first four SDGs alone.¹⁸² Additionally, UNCTAD warns that debt sustainability for developing countries is less dependent on an indebted country's own policy actions than it is on the general state of the global economy.¹⁸³ Thus, achieving debt sustainability, in particular for lower- to lower-middle-income countries, requires the mobilization of extensive additional external financial resources, namely ODA, as well as comprehensive debt relief measures.¹⁸⁴

Debt Relief

The COVID-19 pandemic required many governments to spend additional financial resources to reinforce their healthcare systems, support households and companies suffering from a lockdown, and fund the economic recovery once the pandemic has been controlled.¹⁸⁵ Since many economies suffered from the economic impact of the pandemic, governments will likely miss out on crucial tax revenue to fund the additional spending, leading to them to resort to borrowing and acquire more public debt.¹⁸⁶ As such, the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic will exacerbate the risk of developing countries receding into debt distress.¹⁸⁷ In order to avoid this risk, debt relief measures, suspensions of debt service payments, and a restructuring of the international debt system are required.¹⁸⁸

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many debt relief initiatives were already in place, such as the informal association of like-minded creditor States in the Paris Club or the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)

¹⁷⁴ WBG, *Debt*, 2020.

¹⁷⁵ IMF, *Joint World Bank-IMF Debt Sustainability Framework for Low-Income Countries*, 2020.

¹⁷⁶ UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 129.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 129; UN General Assembly, *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/146)*, 2020, p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 27.

¹⁸⁰ UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 133; UN General Assembly, *External debt sustainability and development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/234)*, 2019, p. 13.

¹⁸¹ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 27.

¹⁸² UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 133.

¹⁸³ UNCTAD, *Current Challenges to Developing Country Debt Sustainability*, 2019, pp. 20-21.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21; UN General Assembly, *External debt sustainability and development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/234)*, 2019, p. 15.

¹⁸⁵ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 129.

¹⁸⁸ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020; UNSDG, *Debt and COVID-19: A Global Response in Solidarity*, 2020, p. 7.

Initiative by WBG and IMF.¹⁸⁹ As a response to the threat of a debt crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, in May 2020, the Group of 20 leading economies (G20) started a debt service suspension initiative (DSSI) for the 73 poorest debtor countries for 2020, potentially freeing between \$11.5 and \$14 billion in debt payments for those countries.¹⁹⁰ Yet, by July 2020, the G20 countries stated that so far 42 debtor countries have asked to participate in the DSSI, amounting to only \$5.3 billion worth of freed up debt payments.¹⁹¹ In response, WBG appealed to G20 countries to expand DSSI well into 2021.¹⁹² A similar appeal has been made by the Initiative on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond, which has been convened by the UN Secretary-General in conjunction with Canada and Jamaica.¹⁹³ The initiative's discussion group on "Debt and COVID-19" called for an expansion of DSSI to go beyond 2020, to also cover middle-income countries, to include MDBs and other IFIs as creditors, and to further the participation of private creditors.¹⁹⁴ This has also been recommended by the most recent "Report prepared by the secretariat of [UNCTAD] on external debt sustainability and development" (A/75/281), which will be discussed by the Second Committee during its the 75th session.¹⁹⁵

Debt Restructuring

Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic could present a chance to revisit the current international debt architecture.¹⁹⁶ In this context, the UN Sustainable Development Group recommended to rework the mechanisms and principles for sovereign debt restructuring.¹⁹⁷ Sovereign debt restructuring, or also public debt restructuring, refers to a renegotiation of the terms, upon which a loan was granted to a government by a creditor in order to ensure debt sustainability and avoid debt distress.¹⁹⁸ The AAAA already put forward a set of principles on debt restructuring, which should occur in a "timely, orderly, effective, fair [manner] and [be] negotiated in good faith."¹⁹⁹ These principles have been supplemented by General Assembly resolution 69/319 on the "Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes" (2015), which further declares that debt restructuring should promote transparency, impartiality, the rule of law and sustainability as well as adhere to "sovereign immunity [of State] from jurisdiction and execution [...] before foreign domestic courts."²⁰⁰

To build on these principles, DESA proposed to further develop soft law principles on debt restructuring and to establish a sovereign debt forum.²⁰¹ Such a sovereign debt forum could function as a discussion platform between debtor States and creditors.²⁰²

¹⁸⁹ Paris Club, *Frequently Asked Questions*, 2020; WBG, *Debt relief*, 2020.

¹⁹⁰ WBG, *Debt Service Suspension and COVID-19*, 2020; Wheatley & Fleming, G20 falls short on debt relief for poor countries, *Financial Times*, 2020.

¹⁹¹ Wheatley & Fleming, G20 falls short on debt relief for poor countries, *Financial Times*, 2020.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*.

¹⁹³ UN DESA et al., *First Meeting Summary*, 2020; UN DESA et al., *Follow-up on the High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Discussion Group IV: "Debt and COVID-19": Background Document*.

¹⁹⁴ UN DESA et al., *Follow-up on the High-Level Event on Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond Discussion Group IV: "Debt and COVID-19": Background Document*.

¹⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *External debt sustainability and development: Note by the Secretary-General (A/75/281)*, 2020, p. 17.

¹⁹⁶ UNSDG, *Debt and COVID-19: A Global Response in Solidarity*, 2020, p. 11.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12; UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020.

¹⁹⁸ Hagan, *Sovereign Debt Restructuring: The Centrality of the IMF's Role*, 2020, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, pp. 27-28.

²⁰⁰ UN General Assembly, *Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes (A/RES/69/319)*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

²⁰¹ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has far reaching implications for the financing of sustainable development.²⁰³ While ODA from DAC countries slightly rose in 2019 by 1.4% to \$155 billion compared to its 2018 numbers, economic shocks resulting from the pandemic require a strong political will from donor countries to maintain ODA at its 2019 level.²⁰⁴ Likewise, UNCTAD projections show that FDI inflows will fall by up to 40% in 2020 and by another 10% in 2021, affecting the flow of private capital to developing countries and countries with transitional economies the most.²⁰⁵ This lack of financial resources for development requires many countries to resort to borrowing and taking up debt to fight the pandemic and its economic impact.²⁰⁶ However, this increases the risk of countries receding into debt distress and being unable to repay its debt.²⁰⁷ Thus, debt relief measures and debt restructurings are, now more than ever, necessary to ensure debt sustainability.²⁰⁸

Further Research

When researching this topic, delegates should first look to understand the structures of the FfD process: What role does the General Assembly Second Committee play within the FfD process? What are the interlinkages between the General Assembly and ECOSOC? How does ECOSOC's work inform the General Assembly's work? What are the implications of the lack of development financing for women and children? How can the climate crisis be addressed, and climate action be financed despite the ongoing pandemic? Looking at mobilizing external financial resources, how will the COVID-19 pandemic affect ODA, FDI and debt sustainability? How can adverse impacts of the pandemic on external financial resources be mitigated? What solutions have been discussed to address the pandemic's impact at a global level or within OECD DAC?

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This publication has been provided by the NGO Committee on Financing for Development, a committee composed of various non-governmental organizations to promote a civil society perspective on sustainable development. Within this publication, the Committee provides a brief overview over key aspects of the FfD process, and highlights some of the more critical aspects of the FfD process within the UN system, such as the focus on mobilizing private finance for sustainable development within the AAAA. This document will provide a useful overview over the FfD topic and will be a solid basis for delegate's further research.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2020). *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*. Retrieved 18 July 2020 from: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/5e331623-en.pdf>

This OECD report was produced by the Development Co-operation Directorate of OECD. It situates the history and recent development of ODA in the current COVID-19 context. Not only does this report provide the 2019 ODA numbers by DAC members, but it also presents three different scenarios for the direction of ODA in light of the ongoing

²⁰³ UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. xvii.

²⁰⁴ OECD, *Aid by DAC members increases in 2019 with more aid to the poorest countries*, 2020, p. 8; OECD, *Development Co-Operation Profiles 2020: Six decades of ODA: Insights and outlook in the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 16.

²⁰⁵ UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2020*, 2020, pp. 2, 8.

²⁰⁶ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.; UN IATF, *Financing for Development Report 2020*, 2020, p. 129.

²⁰⁸ UN DESA, *UN/DESA Policy Brief #72: COVID-19 and sovereign debt*, 2020.

pandemic. Delegates can refer to this document for guidance on how to address the urgent need for ODA in their working paper.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2020). *World Investment Report 2020*. Retrieved 17 August 2020 from: https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/wir2020_en.pdf

The World Investment Report 2020 is issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. It covers five sections: global trends in investments, regional trends in investments, policy issues concerning trade and investment, international production capacities and investments in SDGs. One common theme that stretches across all five sections is the economic impact of COVID-19. Delegates might find this report useful as it provides a comprehensive picture over the economic impact of COVID-19 on trade, investment, and sustainable development.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2020). *High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development: Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 23 August 2020 from: <https://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffddialogue/#home>

This website for the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development is operated by DESA and its FSDO. It presents an overview over the program of the High-level Dialogue, its outcome document, and various supporting documents. Since the High-level Dialogue was the first to be held since the adoption of the AAAA in 2015, this event will be important for delegates to consider in their research. This website can provide delegates with a starting point for their research into the FfD follow-up process from the perspective of the General Assembly.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2020). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020*. Retrieved 23 August 2020 from: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2020/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2020.pdf>

The Sustainable Development Goals Report is a yearly publication by the Statistics Division of DESA. It showcases the current progress towards the achievement of the SDGs and highlights areas where further action for sustainable development is needed. In the context of this report, SDG 17 “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” is of highest relevance for delegates researching FfD, in particular mobilizing external financial resources for sustainable development.

United Nations, Economic and Social Council. (2020). *Report of the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up (E/FFDF/2020/3)*. Retrieved 19 July 2020 from: <https://www.undocs.org/en/E/FFDF/2020/3>

The report of the 2020 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up was compiled and presented to the General Assembly by the President of the ECOSOC. It contains the intergovernmentally agreed conclusions and recommendations, which represent the outcome document of the forum. For delegates, considering this report in their research is useful as the outcomes of the Forum on Financing for Development follow-up inform the FfD review process of the Second Committee.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-third session. (2019). *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development (A/RES/74/207)*. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/74/380). Retrieved 22 August 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/74/207>

With this annual General Assembly resolution, the Second Committee regularly reviews the current FfD process. In this resolution, the General Assembly takes note of relevant FfD reports, highlights important FfD issues that the international community needs to consider in order to achieve the SDGs, and requests the Secretary-General to provide an “action-oriented report” on the FfD follow-up process. Delegates will find this resolution useful as a starting point for their further research on Second Committee priorities for development financing.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fourth session. (2019). *International financial system and development (A/RES/74/202)*. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/74/379/Add.2). Retrieved 7 August 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/74/202>

The General Assembly annually adopts a resolution on the relationship between the “International financial system and development” under the agenda item “Macroeconomic policy questions.” This resolution highlights the importance of reforming the international financial system to adapt to the growing needs for financing sustainable development and provides concrete recommendations thereon. It is therefore crucial for delegates to consider the work of the international community on this topic, as it directly links to the AAAA and its action areas. Additionally, delegates might look to this resolution to identify further important actors within the FfD process.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *External debt sustainability and development: Note by the Secretary-General (A/75/281)*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <https://www.undocs.org/A/75/281>

This report on “External debt sustainability and development” was compiled by UNCTAD and transmitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly Second Committee. It presents an extensive analysis of external debt sustainability indicators, which help assess the current external debt situation of both developing and developed countries. For delegates, this report is useful as it also assesses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on external debt sustainability of developing countries and provides policy recommendations to mitigate that impact.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/146)*. Retrieved 18 September 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/en/A/75/146>

Per General Assembly resolution 74/207 (2019) on the “Follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the International Conferences on Financing for Development,” the Secretary-General was requested to create “an action-oriented” report on the current challenges and trends in FfD. The report was drafted against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and contextualizes the outcomes of the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up within the pandemic. For delegates, this report will present the basis for an assessment of the current state of the FfD review process.

United Nations, Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development. (2020). *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020*. Retrieved 6 July 2020 from: https://developmentfinance.un.org/sites/developmentfinance.un.org/files/FSDR_2020.pdf

The Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2020 is the fifth report by IATF on the current progress on development financing and was published amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This report is divided into four sections: two thematic sections and two sections reviewing the current developments in FfD and the impact of COVID-19 on FfD. Within this publication, IATF also provides recommendations on the further course of action for financing sustainable development. It is important for delegates to review this document as it explains key challenges and issues that the FfD process faces, and provides a number of best practice examples.

United Nations, Secretary-General. (2019). *Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved 16 August 2020 from: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/UN-SG-Roadmap-Financing-the-SDGs-July-2019.pdf>

The Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents the Secretary-General’s attempt at providing a concrete plan of action for the mobilization of financial resources for sustainable development. The roadmap provides specific action areas and key asks, and highlights priority areas and current initiatives by the UN system on FfD. Delegates will find this document useful as the key asks contained in the

roadmap function as concrete policy recommendations for a number of actors within the FfD process.

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II. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Sustainable Economic and Financial Development

Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) include, but are not limited to broadband and internet services, mobile and computer devices, and software for communication.²⁰⁹ ICTs are integral in the promotion and acceleration of sustainable development as they are reflected in the three pillars of development – economic prosperity, social inclusion, and environmental protection.²¹⁰ During the 75th session, the Second Committee highlighted that ICTs enable financing, economic growth, and sustainable development by incorporating new cross-cutting solutions for development while considering a draft resolution on ICTs and development.²¹¹ Additionally, ICTs further aid in global connectivity and accelerated progress towards the achievement of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.²¹² The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international community has especially highlighted the importance of ICTs in global connectivity and sustainability of economies.²¹³ As our global community was faced with reorganization and recalibration in the delivery of goods and services, the cross-cutting capabilities of ICTs were leveraged in adapting to changing methods of communication, collaboration, and fluctuating economies.²¹⁴

The effects of the pandemic on global economies illustrates the interconnected relationship between ICTs and economic and financial development.²¹⁵ The sudden transition from in-person to virtual communications impacted most businesses rapidly; businesses that had already deployed ICTs for communication and ecommerce quickly adapted, and in some cases grew, while many businesses especially those in emerging economies were unable to effectively move their goods and services online resulting in increased debt and even bankruptcy.²¹⁶ The role of ICTs is twofold; the instrumental usage that sustains capacity-building, education and governmental policy reforms, and the industrial usage that creates economic opportunities through software, hardware and communication services.²¹⁷ Access and use of ICTs grants the opportunity to participate in the digital world and contribute to the digital economy.²¹⁸ Additionally, ICTs impact development challenges such as financing for development by encouraging investments and partnerships from all levels of government, private partnerships, and civil societies.²¹⁹

An important consideration of ICTs for sustainable economic and financial development, is the necessity of access to the digital world.²²⁰ Digitalization allows for increased participation in business platforms, online financial services, competitive markets, and education training.²²¹ Considering the urgent transition

²⁰⁹ ITU, *The ICT Development Index: Methodology, Indicators, and Definitions*, 2019.

²¹⁰ ITU, *ITU's approach to using ICTs to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.

²¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Agenda Item 16: Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *Organization of work of the Second Committee*, 2020.

²¹² UN General Assembly, *Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development (A/RES/73/218)*, 2018.

²¹³ ITU, *COVID-19 response and recovery*, 2020.

²¹⁴ UN DESA, *Recover Better*, 2020.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ ITU, *Visions of the Information Societies, The Nature of Information Society: A Developing World Perspective*, 2003.

²¹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development (A/RES/73/218)*, 2018.

²¹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (A/RES/70/125)*, 2015.

²²⁰ ITU, *How ICTs are accelerating the SDGs*, 2017; World Bank, *COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Policy Response to Accelerating Digital Transformation While Bridging the Digital Divide in Russia*, (2020).

²²¹ UNCTAD, *Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade, and Development*, 2017.

to online services as a result of COVID-19, digitization is recognized as a key factor for sustainable economic and financial development.²²² Secondly, digitalization holds an essential role in fostering Information Societies, which are outlined as societies geared towards the sharing of knowledge and information, which improves global connectedness.²²³ Lastly, digitalization allows access to internet services, information and data on a global scale.²²⁴ These Information Societies integrate e-strategies, specifically e-government and e-economies that target opportunities in strengthening financial systems.²²⁵ E-strategies promote international cooperation through the strengthening of partnerships between governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and the private sector to address the distribution of ICT resources.²²⁶

International and Regional Framework

The *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) (2015) emphasizes that investing in economic resources that promote capacity building and economic growth create an environment that promotes empowerment, equitable economic growth, and sustainable development.²²⁷ Additionally, the AAAA encourages the creation of policies and frameworks that promote investments in ICTs, strengthens public-private partnerships (PPPs) and partnerships between governments.²²⁸ The 2003 and 2005 World Summits on Information Society (WSIS) reaffirm the fundamental rights and freedoms of all peoples to sustainable livelihoods and well-being.²²⁹ This collaboration of the international community provided a global alignment for generating access, use, and sharing of knowledge, with the common desire to regulate ICTs for universal benefit.²³⁰ The WSIS resulted in the *Declaration of Principles* (2003), the *Tunis Commitment* (2005) and the *Tunis Agenda* (2005).²³¹ The *Declaration of Principles* underlines the relationship between the development of ICTs and societies, and improved quality of life for all.²³² The *Tunis Commitment* and the *Tunis Agenda* address internet governance, policy recommendations, and mechanisms for financing to encourage the implementation of ICT resources for sustainable development.²³³ The Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) acknowledges General Assembly resolution 70/125 (2015) that highlights the crosscutting contributions of ICTs to development.²³⁴ These documents note that the cost of ICTs and attaining sustainable funding for ICTs would help in the implementation process and bridge the digital divide.²³⁵ As ICTs evolve, the digital divide between developed countries, with resources to attain these tools, and developing countries who lack the financial structure, continues to grow.²³⁶

In addition to the outcome documents of the WSIS, an annual forum was convened to discuss the implementation of the commitments, and in recent years, the role of ICTs in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).²³⁷ An outcome of the 2016 WSIS Forum was the creation of the WSIS

²²² UN DESA, *Recover Better*, 2020

²²³ WSIS, *Declaration of Principles*, 2003.

²²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (A/RES/70/125)*, 2015.

²²⁵ WSIS, *Declaration of Principles*, 2003.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ WSIS, *Declaration of Principles*, 2003.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.; WSIS, *Tunis Commitment*, 2005.

²³² WSIS, *Declaration of Principles*, 2003.

²³³ WSIS, *Tunis Commitment*, 2005.

²³⁴ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (A/RES/70/125)*, 2015.

²³⁵ WSIS, *Tunis Commitment*, 2005.

²³⁶ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

²³⁷ UN DESA, *WSIS Action Lines: Supporting the Implementation of SDGs*, 2019.

Action Lines and a supporting SDGs Matrix which outlines the role of ICTs in each SDG, and the impact of ICTs on advancing sustainable development.²³⁸ Examples include the utilization of ICTs for weather forecasting to send early warning signs that increase preparedness against natural hydro metrological related disasters.²³⁹ This was successfully implemented by Member States which assisted in reducing vulnerability to climate related hazards, and targeted SDG 13.3 by improving education and institutional capacities on climate mitigation and early warning.²⁴⁰

Role of the International System

As a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) studies the relationship between ICTs and the 2030 Agenda.²⁴¹ The priority theme of the 22nd session of CSTD examined “the impact of rapid technological change on sustainable development.”²⁴² Although emerging ICTs accelerate the pace towards achieving the SDGs, ICTs may disrupt markets and widen existing economic and social gaps.²⁴³ The Second Committee continues to assess and evaluate the use of ICTs particularly as a way to accelerate progress to achieve the 2030 agenda; in the 75th session, the Second Committee again revisited ICTs and sustainable development to continue to address gaps in infrastructure.²⁴⁴ This includes the development of governmental strategies and policy recommendations that address investments needed in infrastructure, capacity building, and financial systems.²⁴⁵

The annual WSIS Forum is a collaboration of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Committee on Trade (UNCTAD).²⁴⁶ The WSIS Forum highlights key themes including; economic growth opportunities, strengthening governance of the digital world, and ICTs for sustainable development.²⁴⁷ The WSIS is further supported through reports presented by these agencies, for example, UNCTAD's Digital Economy Report (DER) of 2019 draws the relationship between inclusion in the digital economy and the empowerment of emerging economies.²⁴⁸ The digital economy transforms global value chains through the development of different structures of collaboration and value creation.²⁴⁹ The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) facilitates this collaboration by engaging various stakeholders to discuss public policy regarding issues and opportunities related to the internet.²⁵⁰ A 2018 IGF report highlights the increasing number of publicly available free internet access points to encourage the use of ICTs for social and economic development and global connectedness.²⁵¹ To that end, Open Educational Resources (OER), which are freely accessible digital resources for learning, sharing, and teaching, allow for public access to information, and inclusion through digitalization.²⁵² The utilization of public domain content, existing under open-licenses, OER permits for no-cost access to learning, research, and information.²⁵³ This initiative enables capacity building efforts and enhances ICT

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ UN DESA, *WSIS Action Lines: Supporting the Implementation of SDGs*, 2019.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ UN ECOSOC, *Science, Technology, and Innovation for Development*, 2019.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ UN General Assembly, *Agenda Item 16: Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development*, 2019; UN General Assembly, *Organization of work of the Second Committee*, 2020.

²⁴⁵ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Progress made in the Implementation of and Follow-Up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society at the Regional and International Levels (A/74/62-E/2019/6)*, 2019.

²⁴⁶ ITU, *WSIS Action Lines Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs*, 2016.

²⁴⁷ WSIS, *Tunis Commitment*, 2005.

²⁴⁸ UNCTAD, *Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade, and Development*, 2017.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ WSIS, *Tunis Agenda*, 2005.

²⁵¹ IGF, *IGF 2018 Messages – Development, Innovation, and Economic Issues*, 2018.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ UNESCO, *Building Knowledge Societies, Open Educational Resources (OER)*, 2019.

skills.²⁵⁴ This has been further highlighted during the IGF 2019 Forum in Berlin, Germany, where the themes related to economic growth and inclusion were centered around Data Governance and Digital Inclusion.²⁵⁵ Understanding the relationship between expanding digital inclusivity and economic growth, the IGF implemented National and Regional IGFs (NRIs) and discussed strategies for multi-stakeholder approaches to encourage sustainability in future investments and opportunities.²⁵⁶ Recognizing that digital inclusion and access to ICTs improves economic growth, NRIs established workshop discussions focused on utilizing multi-level engagement for the purpose of strengthening partnerships between states to ensure developed and developing states have equitable opportunities.²⁵⁷

Similarly, the ITU works to achieve the SDGs; by coordinating and developing international standards alongside the private sector, governments, and CSOs.²⁵⁸ In a virtual celebration of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD-20), the ITU launched their framework, “Connect 2030 Agenda for Global Telecommunication/ICT Development,” also known as “Connect 2030.”²⁵⁹ The goals of Connect 2030 focus on five main targets: Growth, increasing access to ICTs to support digital economies; Inclusiveness, to bridge the digital divide; Sustainability, to manage emerging risks; Innovation; and Partnership.²⁶⁰ The growth and inclusiveness aspect of this strategy focuses on the urgent need to transition to digital economies.²⁶¹ The ITU also assists efforts to establish affordable and accessible ICTs by promoting collaboration for economic and sustainable development.²⁶² For example, the ITU launched the ITU-McCaw Foundation Broadband Wireless Network Project for Africa that implements broadband wireless networks with ICT applications at affordable rates within hospitals and remote areas.²⁶³ This improved the efficiency of the health care systems and enhanced national e-strategies, specifically e-health.²⁶⁴ Such projects reduce the financing barrier faced by LDCs to implement ICTs in remote areas by partnering with organizations that can bring in resources, ensuring improved accessibility and capacity for individuals in the community.²⁶⁵ Additionally, the ITU leads studies that examine International Internet Connectivity (IIC) by conducting research on Internet Service Providers (ISP), the connectedness between countries, and the barriers faced by LDCs.²⁶⁶ Internet cost inflation due to high traffic in areas with lower proportions of ISPs, prompted the IIC to establish an international standard to connect local Internet Exchange Points with local communities to reduce traffic and internet costs.²⁶⁷ These hubs improve global connectedness while reducing the digital divide and increasing affordability in isolated regions.²⁶⁸

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) commits to the creation and advancement of Inclusive and Sustainable Development through knowledge and capacity-building frameworks centered around the development of ICT skills and development.²⁶⁹ The outcomes of these initiatives enhance employment, food security, and well-being, creating a sustainable livelihood.²⁷⁰ This can particularly improve the livelihoods of women in agricultural communities in LDCs where women account for 70% of the agriculture labor force and contribute significantly towards the socio-economic

²⁵⁴ UNESCO, *Intergovernmental Expert Meeting adopts revised Draft Recommendation on Open Education Resources*, 2019.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ IGF, *The Internet of Trust*, 2020.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ ITU, *ITU's approach to using ICTs to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.

²⁵⁹ ITU, *Connect 2030 – An agenda to connect all to a better world*, 2020.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² ITU, *ITU's approach to using ICTs to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals*, 2018.

²⁶³ ITU, *WSIS Action Lines Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs*, 2016, p. 9.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ ITU, *International Internet Connectivity*, 2016.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ UNIDO, *Introduction to Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development*, 2015.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

output of their states.²⁷¹ UNIDO's Agribusiness Development Branch assists in the development of ICTs to improve agriculture to generate employment, reduce food insecurity, and promote entrepreneurship.²⁷²

Bridging the Digital and Knowledge Divide

The ITU reports that 4.3 billion people still remain offline or have limited access to ICTs.²⁷³ The reality of a global economic transition and slowdown due to COVID-19 showcased the direct effects of this digital divide.²⁷⁴ Many populations including in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remained offline with no access to ICT resources such as internet and telephone services, hardware devices, access to information, and participation in the rapidly growing digital market.²⁷⁵ The sudden global shift to telecommunication and e-commerce contributed to this expanding digital divide, and highlighted existing structural obstacles in gaining quality broadband connection, deploying sufficient towers in underserved regions, and addressing the cost in attaining ICTs.²⁷⁶ An example of this sudden shift can be seen in Italy's ICT usage; as one of the first countries to enforce strict limitations on movement and economic activity, there was a 50% increase in voice and video messaging services, and 1000% increase in overall video services.²⁷⁷ In comparison to the continent of Africa which has below 40% overall connectedness, the divide is particularly pronounced between developed countries, and LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS.²⁷⁸ Within developing states these barriers are increased by factors such as geographical isolation, rapid urbanization, and gender inequalities which constrain the instrumental and industrial use of ICTs.²⁷⁹ The structural digital divide leads to a knowledge divide, a lack of technological literacy, inadequate proficiency in the use of ICTs, and inability to access readily available information online.²⁸⁰ Not only does this exist as a critical issue in gaining basic access to important information and global news, it also is a large barrier in being able to engage and secure financial livelihoods.²⁸¹ Closing the digital and knowledge divide stimulates economic growth by enabling inclusive economic participation, which expands global e-commerce markets.²⁸² The expansion of global e-commerce translates to greater engagement and opportunity at regional levels.²⁸³ UNCTAD reports that emerging economies largely contribute to increasing global e-commerce and international trade by expanding the international flow of goods and services, and sustaining economic growth.²⁸⁴

The World Bank suggests that increasing global connectedness and financial growth through ensuring participation in the digital economy, can be achieved by providing telephone and internet services.²⁸⁵ This will increase opportunities in international trade, economic and social development, and lift developing regions out of poverty.²⁸⁶ Additionally, it will allow for the development of capacity through technology literacy and proficiency, and provide new employment opportunities.²⁸⁷ The ability to understand how to

²⁷¹ UNIDO, *Agribusiness Development: Transforming rural life to create wealth*, 2013, p. 25.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ ITU, *WSIS Action Lines Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs*, 2016.

²⁷⁴ World Economic Forum, *COVID-19 could widen the digital gap. Here's what's needed now*, 2020.

²⁷⁵ UN General Assembly, *Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development (A/RES/69/204)*, 2014.

²⁷⁶ UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019*, 2019.

²⁷⁷ Parikh, *Keeping Our Services Stable and Reliable During the COVID-19 Outbreak*, 2020.

²⁷⁸ ITU, *WSIS Action Lines Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs*, 2016.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ UN General Assembly, *International Financing System and Development (A/RES/74/168)*, 2019.

²⁸¹ World Economic Forum, *COVID-19 could widen the digital gap. Here's what's needed now*, 2020.

²⁸² UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019*, 2019.

²⁸³ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

²⁸⁴ UNCTAD, *Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade, and Development*, 2017.

²⁸⁵ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Progress made in the Implementation of and Follow-Up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society at the Regional and International Levels (A/74/62-E/2019/6)*, 2019.

use a telephone or navigate the internet also builds on the foundation of Information Societies which encourage the creation of national and international e-strategies.²⁸⁸ These e-strategies promote dialogue in areas for development that influence trade, health, agriculture, education, and, most importantly, logistics in harnessing ICT resources.²⁸⁹ For developing countries, this provides opportunities for policy recommendations and partnerships with developed states and private investors to lay the groundwork for commerce and innovation.²⁹⁰

The development of new ICTs creates a large amount of e-waste as the ICTs once utilized in developed countries are not being reused or disposed of sustainably.²⁹¹ This leaves a considerable environmental imprint, but also a missed opportunity to share these resources.²⁹² In 2016 alone, 44.7 million metric tons of e-waste was generated, and only 8.9 million tons were collected and managed.²⁹³ Encouraging the re-use of ICTs through global partnerships improves digital inclusion and reduces financial barriers to access by providing affordable re-used devices.²⁹⁴ The joint efforts from the International Solid Waste Organization (ISWA), United Nations University (UNU), and the ITU established the Global E-waste Statistics Partnership that collects worldwide e-waste statistics to track e-waste and influence international and regional partners to work together and re-use ICT devices.²⁹⁵ These statistics assist in evaluating the number of unused ICT industrial tools in order to increase their life cycle.²⁹⁶ These efforts close the digital and knowledge divide and encourage the reuse of ICT industrial tools; building capacity and accelerating economic growth.²⁹⁷

Developing regions often face additional barriers such as challenging geographical terrain, social and economic inequalities, and particularly isolated communities; this disproportionately impacts women, and youth, who remain the lowest subscribed users in developing regions.²⁹⁸ Another important consideration is the impact of global crises, such as COVID-19, and the lasting impressions on the pace of acceleration for sustainable development.²⁹⁹

Challenges in Financing ICTs for Development

In order to achieve the SDGs, sustainable financial support and ongoing investments in ICTs must be obtained.³⁰⁰ The lack of funding for ICT initiatives increases the strain on existing financial systems, often limiting sustainable development and progress towards the 2030 Agenda.³⁰¹ During the 74th session of the Second Committee, the integration of financial mechanisms to fund ICTs by improving partnerships with private investors, and civil society was deemed critical for accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda.³⁰²

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ UN ECOSOC, *Assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (E/RES/2018/28)*, 2018.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ ITU, *Handbook for the Development of a Policy Framework on ICT/E-waste*, 2018.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ UN General Assembly, *Outcome Document of the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (A/RES/70/125)*, 2015.

²⁹⁹ UN, DESA, *Recover Better*, 2020.

³⁰⁰ UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019, 2019*, pp. 3-7.

³⁰¹ UNCTAD, *Information Economy Report 2017: Digitalization, Trade, and Development*, 2017.

³⁰² UN General Assembly, *International Financing System and Development (A/RES/74/168)*, 2019.

The Secretary-General's Strategy for financing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* further emphasizes the importance of transforming financial systems by addressing current financial constraints and focusing on three main objectives.³⁰³ First, aligning global economic policies and economic systems between developed and developing Member States to support the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.³⁰⁴ Second, improving current financial strategies and investments at all levels of government, with emphasis on inclusivity for all Member States, by considering the affordability and availability of resources.³⁰⁵ And third, by investing in financial innovations, technologies, and digitalization in order to ensure an equitable environment for development and economic opportunity.³⁰⁶ Further development of cooperative financial strategies and alignment with regional governmental groups is required in order to resolve the lack of resources by Member States.³⁰⁷ Investments must be focused on exploring all means of implementation, most importantly ICTs.³⁰⁸ The *Tunis Agenda for Information Societies* details the importance of commitment from all levels of government, the international community, PPPs, and stakeholders to achieve access to all people so that all may benefit from ICTs.³⁰⁹ Considering the review of the implementation of the WSIS, quickly adapting financial mechanisms for ICT infrastructure is necessary to maintain progress towards the 2030 Agenda.³¹⁰

The Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) reviews existing financial mechanisms that meet the challenges in ICTs for development and identifies affordability as one of the main challenges to financing ICTs for sustainable development.³¹¹ Affordability of ICTs remains a challenge particularly for developing countries that lack the resources and depend on the international community to invest in their infrastructure.³¹² This dependency holds the potential risk of increasing international debt and is an unsustainable foundation for financing.³¹³ The ICT Development Fund (ICT-DF), a partnership between Members of the ITU, the public and private sector, and financial agencies, works to accelerate sustainable development by co-financing multilateral ICT development projects.³¹⁴ An example of this success is the partnership of Member States in assisting the establishment of Sector Governance in Telecommunications.³¹⁵ This initiative allowed for the introduction of computerized systems for management, capacity building for skills training, and the creation of interconnection policies which regulate radio communications, broadcasting, carrier and service providers, and costs.³¹⁶ The Second Committee advocates for developing broadband for all; however, in order to implement this on a global scale, industrial infrastructure and instruments for ICT must become more affordable.³¹⁷ This includes hardware, software, cellular towers, routers, equipment, and power boxes or generators.³¹⁸ Without the infrastructure to sustain the usage of ICTs, they will not be viable, and their operations will have no effect on social or economic development.³¹⁹

³⁰³ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

³⁰⁴ UN Secretary-General, *Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ UN General Assembly, *International Financing System and Development (A/RES/74/168)*, 2019.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ WSIS, *Tunis Commitment*, 2005.

³¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015.

³¹¹ ITU, *The Report of the Task Force on Financing Mechanisms for ICT for Development*, 2004.

³¹² UN IATF, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019*, 2019, p. 16.

³¹³ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

³¹⁴ ITU, *ICT Development Fund Projects*, 2019.

³¹⁵ ITU, *ICT Development Fund Projects: Assistance for the Establishment of Sector Governance in Telecommunications in East Timor*, 2011.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Progress made in the Implementation of and Follow-Up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society at the Regional and International Levels (A/74/62-E/2019/6)*, 2019.

Conclusion

ICTs are critical enablers of economic and social development, and catalysts in the achieving the 2030 Agenda.³²⁰ Utilizing ICTs sustains inclusive digitalization that stimulates the digital economy and a diverse e-commerce market.³²¹ This promotes economic growth, in addition to expanding trade and global value chains which supplement regional economic opportunities.³²² This can only be accomplished through the instrumental use of ICTs that promote capacity building efforts that will boost technology literacy and understanding.³²³ Additionally, the promotion of ICTs develops Information Societies where the sharing of knowledge and information creates an increasingly connected world, with readily available data online.³²⁴ This translates into stronger cooperation for financial and economic policies that will continue to strengthen the global economy, in addition to development of financial strategies and mechanisms required to ensure realistic implementation of ICT initiatives.³²⁵ However, incorporation of ICTs for all continues to face challenges in bridging the digital divide, securing global financing, and establishing cooperative ICT development policies.³²⁶ The 74th session of the Second Committee, focused on the follow-up of the WSIS, and the implementation of ICTs at regional levels of government.³²⁷ This is most important in ensuring inclusive participation and policy adaptability for Member States.³²⁸ Additionally, urgency is noted in strengthening international financial systems to ensure financial inclusion and management, and progress is continued towards the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.³²⁹

Further Research

As delegates continue their research, they should consider the following questions: What other challenges may the international community face in financing ICTs for sustainable development? What more can be achieved to integrate ICTs in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDs? Considering the impacts of COVID-19, what new emerging issues act as a barrier in addressing this topic? Are there other mechanisms that reduce the digital and knowledge divide? How does debt management influence the global financing system, and what can be done to address this? How can e-waste be recycled or reused to assist with providing ICT access and use? What role do regional governments, public and private sector, and civil societies play in financing ICTs for sustainable development? Noting the already existing barriers and inequality in participation in online markets, what more can be done to address the financial crises brought forward by the rapid economic transitions to online services?

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<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2016/Content/documents/outcomes/WSISForum2016---WSISActionLinesSupportingImplementationSDGs.pdf>

The WSIS Action Lines provides direct linkages between ICTs development, the WSIS Action Plan, and the 17 SDGs. This source outlines the influence of ICTs on the 2030 Agenda in addition to providing examples about the individual goals. Additionally, it

³²⁰ UN General Assembly, *Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development (A/RES/73/218)*, 2018.

³²¹ Ibid..

³²² ITU, *WSIS Action Lines Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs*, 2016.

³²³ UN General Assembly, *Information and Communication Technologies for Sustainable Development (A/RES/73/218)*, 2018.

³²⁴ WSIS, *Declaration of Principles*, 2003.

³²⁵ UN Secretary-General, *Roadmap for Financing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

³²⁶ ITU, *WSIS Action Lines Supporting the Implementation of the SDGs*, 2016.

³²⁷ UN General Assembly & UN ECOSOC, *Progress made in the Implementation of and Follow-Up to the Outcomes of the World Summit on Information Society at the Regional and International Levels (A/74/62-E/2019/6)*, 2019.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ UN IATF, *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects 2018*, 2018.

discusses the role regional governments, multi-stakeholders, public and private partnerships, and investments in promoting ICTs for development. Delegates will find this source helpful in understanding the relationship between ICTs and implementing SDGs.

International Telecommunication Union. (2019). *The ICT Development Index: Methodology, Indicators, and Definitions*. Retrieved 30 October 2020 from: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/statistics/ITU_ICT%20Development%20Index.pdf

This source provides an understanding of the measurement tools, analysis, and definitions for the consideration of ICT development. The methodologies used within this source provides a technical understanding of terminology, and measurable tools of usage. It focuses on individualizing the components used towards accessing the integration of ICTs within communities. This source will assist delegates in grasping the timeline, and the current development track of ICTs on a global scale.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2015). *Outcome Document of the High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Overall Review of the Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (A/RES/70/125)*. Retrieved 30 October 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/125>

The source showcases the current initiatives taking place within the UN system surrounding ICTs and their influence in progressing global sustainable development. This resolution lists the collaboration among different bodies within the UN system, private partnerships, and civil societies. In consideration of the topic, delegates may find this provides a detailed overview of the current work the General Assembly is contributing to implementation. This source also provides insight to the progress made in implementing the items from WSIS. Additionally, there is explanation of the linkages between ICTs and sustainable development.

United Nations, Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development. (2019). *Financing for Sustainable Development Report*. Retrieved 30 October 2020 from: <https://developmentfinance.un.org/fsdr2019>

This report highlights the current status of global financing for sustainable development. It breaks down the trends, challenges, and opportunities in the UN financial system, and provides insight to a multitude of key financing insights. This source will be useful for delegates in understanding the current structure of global financing, and key factors challenging the system. Additionally, it outlines the role of ICTs, e-commerce, and international trade in accelerating the economy and the 2030 Agenda.

World Summit on the Information Society. (2003). *Declaration of Principles*. Retrieved 30 October 2020 from: <https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/docs2/tunis/off/7.html>

This declaration represents the foundation of the commitment from the UN body of the common desire in recognizing ICTs as enablers of sustainable development. Within this source you will also find the call for all UN entities, governmental bodies, and civil societies to work towards the creation of policy to support these objectives. For delegates this source aids in providing insight to the root of current implementation initiatives, and the calls to actions that shape current strategies.

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III. Disaster Risk Reduction

Introduction

Over the past 10 years, disasters have affected more than 1.5 billion people globally, and led to casualties, displacement, and large-scale economic, social, and environmental consequences.³³⁰ The cost of disasters has amounted to more than \$1.3 trillion in recovery efforts worldwide over the past decade, including the rebuilding of infrastructure as well as the restoration of social services and local markets.³³¹ In an ongoing attempt to mitigate the impact of these disasters, the United Nations (UN) engages in disaster risk reduction, a process defined as “preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.”³³² In order to complete effective disaster risk management, the UN applies “disaster risk reduction policies and strategies to prevent new disaster risk, reduce existing disaster risk and manage residual risk, contributing to the strengthening of resilience and reduction of disaster losses.”³³³ The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) emphasizes risk assessments in the form of socioeconomic analysis for Member States to prepare biological hazards, in order to mitigate impact on human lives, property damage, social and economic disruption, and environmental degradation that may result.³³⁴

The 2015 *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (Sendai Framework) is the current UN framework document on disaster risk reduction.³³⁵ The Sendai Framework centers climate change as a key driver of disaster risk, and emphasize the importance of good governance for disaster risk reduction.³³⁶ It particularly recognizes that disasters also present a threat to achieving sustainable development, as states which are trapped in an endless cycle of trying to respond to and recover from disasters are then unable to focus on sustainable development, particular those states with already limited infrastructure capacity.³³⁷

On 11 March 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the global COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic.³³⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic has been described as a devastating biological hazard that continues to have a direct impact on local, state, and international systems.³³⁹ COVID-19’s far-reaching impact on livelihoods has brought into focus how essential it is for Member States to increase their resilience and invest in social protection systems that can protect livelihoods during a disaster.³⁴⁰ For example, in the Asia-Pacific area, UNDRR has recognized 5 major response challenges to the COVID-19 pandemic: increasing poverty levels; declining fiscal space; criteria for assistance and impact of disasters; prolonged duration of assistance; and limited outreach to the informal sector.³⁴¹ Globally, the pandemic has been estimated to generate a global loss of between 5 million to 25 million jobs, and see losses in labor up 3.4 trillion USD according to the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG).³⁴²

³³⁰ UNDP, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*, 2019.

³³¹ UNDP, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020; UNDP, *Planning and implementing recovery*, 2019.

³³² UNDRR, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

³³³ UNDRR, *Disaster Risk Management*, 2020.

³³⁴ UNDRR, *Hazard definition and classification review*, 2020, p. 7; UNDRR, *Addressing Disaster Risk Reduction of multiple hazards during the COVID-19 crisis*, 2020, p. 5.

³³⁵ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015, p. 2.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*

³³⁷ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 11.

³³⁸ UNDRR, *COVID Action Plan. Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020, p. 1.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁰ UNDRR, *Asia-Pacific COVID-19 Brief: Disaster-Responsive Social Protection*, 2020, p. 2.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-4.

³⁴² UNSDG, *Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19*, 2020, p. 8

International and Regional Framework

The first global framework document on disaster risk reduction was the *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World*, which was adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 1994 and set out the first disaster risk reduction principles, a plan action for disaster risk reduction, and follow-up guidelines.³⁴³ As a follow-up to the Yokohama Strategy, the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction adopted the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015* (2005) (Hyogo Framework), which aimed to create a more comprehensive and detailed plan for disaster risk reduction that focused on the role required by different partners, including local and national governments.³⁴⁴ The Hyogo Framework provides practical guidelines with the purpose of creating more resilient communities by reducing the negative impact of disasters on social, economic and environmental assets.³⁴⁵ In 2015, the World Conference on Disaster Risk reduction adopted the Sendai Framework with its four priority action areas: comprehending disaster risk, improving disaster risk governance for disaster risk management, mobilizing financial resources for disaster risk reduction, and improving disaster preparedness.³⁴⁶ A major development was the inclusion of biological hazards in the Sendai Framework to reduce disaster losses.³⁴⁷ The Sendai Framework had highlighted biological hazards as major risks for the 21st century, as confirmed by the current COVID-19 pandemic.³⁴⁸

In 2015, the General Assembly adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda), which focuses on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to initiate action to promote sustainable development.³⁴⁹ Out of the 17 SDGs, SDGs 1, 11 and 13 are particularly relevant to disaster risk reduction.³⁵⁰ For example, SDG 13 (climate action) aims to “[s]trengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters [sic] in all countries.”³⁵¹ Additionally, SDG 1 (no poverty) works to decrease vulnerable populations’ exposure to climate-related disasters along with the consequences of these disasters, while SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) targets a reduction of economic losses resulting from disasters.³⁵²

In addition to the pivotal Sendai Framework, in 2016, the International Conference on the Implementation of the Health Aspect of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted the *Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*.³⁵³ In these principles, the conference provided a number of key recommendations to further the existing Sendai Framework, including systemically integrating health into

³⁴³ UNDRR, *Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World: guidelines for natural disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation*, 1994.

³⁴⁴ UNDRR, *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*, 2007.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁶ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* (A/RES/69/283), 2015, pp. 9-16.

³⁴⁷ UNDRR, *COVID Action Plan. Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020, p. 1.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015, p. 1.

³⁵⁰ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction* (A/RES/74/218), 2019, p. 6.

³⁵¹ UN General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (A/RES/70/1), 2015, p. 23.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 21-22.

³⁵³ International Conference on the Implementation of the Health Aspect of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, *Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2016.

existing disaster reduction policies, and enhancing cooperation between health authorities and other relevant stakeholders.³⁵⁴

Other key frameworks that support disaster risk reduction include the *Paris Agreement* (2015) and the *New Urban Agenda* (2016).³⁵⁵ The *Paris Agreement* was adopted in 2015 by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a framework document for climate action in order to limit the rising temperatures resulting from climate change to below 2° Celsius.³⁵⁶ The *Paris Agreement* aims to assist in disaster risk reduction efforts by mitigating the effects of climate change, which exacerbates coastal vulnerability, sea levels, atmospheric heat, and other phenomena, thereby increasing the quantity and impact of many types of natural disasters.³⁵⁷ The *New Urban Agenda*, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), is a key framework to address the growing urban population of the world challenges.³⁵⁸ The *New Urban Agenda* highlights the connection between sustainable urban development and disaster risk reduction, as it stipulates that Member States who “[a]dopt and implement disaster risk reduction and management” have more sustainable urban infrastructure, and therefore less loss of life due to disasters.³⁵⁹

Role of the International System

Within the current disaster risk reduction framework, the General Assembly is mandated by the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the Sendai Framework to review the progress and the implementation of disaster risk reduction efforts.³⁶⁰ As such, the General Assembly Second Committee considers disaster risk reduction as part of its agenda item on “sustainable development.”³⁶¹ In 2019, the General Assembly adopted resolution 74/218 on “Disaster risk reduction,” which stresses that capacity-building support, in particular for developing states, should be a top priority in the implementation of the Sendai Framework.³⁶² The General Assembly further stated in its resolution that national and local disaster risk reduction strategies are key to achieving sustainable development, and called for the creation and effective implementation of national and local disaster risk reduction plans by 2020.³⁶³ In September 2019, the UN also hosted the Climate Action Summit where resilient infrastructure and resilience to climate impacts were key agenda items and recurrent themes in discussion.³⁶⁴ The Secretary-General has also released a recent report on disaster risk reduction on the Sendai Framework, which also covers some of the recent impact of COVID-19 on existing reduction frameworks and demonstrates the need for responsiveness within the existing frameworks.³⁶⁵

In General Assembly resolution 61/198 of 2006 on the “International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction,” the General Assembly established the “Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction” (Global Platform).³⁶⁶ The purpose of the Global Platform is to assist in the review of the progress on disaster risk

³⁵⁴ International Conference on the Implementation of the Health Aspect of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, *Bangkok Principles for the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*, 2016.

³⁵⁵ COP 21, *Paris Agreement*, 2015.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/73/231)*, 2018, p. 3.

³⁵⁸ UN General Assembly, *New Urban Agenda (A/RES/71/256)*, 2016, p. 2.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³⁶⁰ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2014, p. 3.

³⁶¹ UN General Assembly, *Agenda items and periodicity*, 2020; UN General Assembly, *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/RES/56/195)*, 2002, p. 2.

³⁶² UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*, 2019, p. 4.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁶⁴ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/248)*, 2020.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁶ UN General Assembly, *International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/RES/61/198)*, 2006, p. 4.

reduction as well as the monitoring and implementation of the Sendai Framework.³⁶⁷ In May 2019, the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Geneva Switzerland.³⁶⁸ At this session, the Global Risk Assessment Framework (GRAF) was launched.³⁶⁹ GRAF is an interdisciplinary platform to improve disaster risk understanding and disaster risk management with the goal of supporting decision-makers in disaster risk reduction efforts and to mobilize financial resources for disaster risk reduction.³⁷⁰ In addition to GRAF, the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction also focused on gender sensitive- and inclusive-disaster risk reduction.³⁷¹

UNDRR is the main focal point for disaster risk reduction strategies and data within the UN Secretariat, and it is headed by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.³⁷² The General Assembly established UNDRR with resolution 56/195 (2001) on the “International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction,” with the main objective of the UNDRR being to better coordinate disaster risk reduction efforts of Member States.³⁷³ In 2017, the UNDRR updated the *United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience* (Plan of Action) to better align the Plan of Action with the Sendai Framework, the *Paris Agreement*, and the 2030 Agenda.³⁷⁴ The goal of the Plan of Action is to better coordinate the work of the wider UN system on disaster risk reduction.³⁷⁵ In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDRR developed a COVID-19 Action Plan that states that “biological hazards (pandemics) are integrated in disaster risk reduction and development planning and programming, including in the development of national and local DRR strategies”.³⁷⁶

Some additional examples of UN system-wide efforts on disaster risk reduction include the work of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).³⁷⁷ UN-Women promotes and facilitates the contribution of women to disaster risk reduction and the leadership of women therein.³⁷⁸ To this end, UN-Women has proposed creating gender-responsive disaster risk reduction sector briefs for different sectors to raise awareness of the role that gender plays in disaster risk mitigation and recovery.³⁷⁹ WHO has focused on cooperating with a large group of partners, civil society organizations to ensure health outcomes for people at risk of emergencies and disasters.³⁸⁰ Recent efforts by WHO include creating community capacity building in health and other sectors to “manage the health risks associated with emergencies and disasters.”³⁸¹ Similarly, UNDP emphasizes disaster risk reduction by fostering risk-informed development and promoting cooperation and coherence of disaster risk plans among states as an important piece of disaster risk reduction.³⁸² UNDP also works to provide information regarding risks and early warning system to states and presently has 64 programs focused on early warning systems.³⁸³

³⁶⁷ Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, *About the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.; Mead, Global Assessment Report Explores Role of Risk Reduction in Achieving SDGs, *International Institute for Sustainable Development*, 2019.

³⁷⁰ UNDRR, *Global Risk Assessment Framework*, 2019.

³⁷¹ Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, *About the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019.

³⁷² UNDRR, *Who we are*, 2019.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ UNDRR, *United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience*, 2017, p. 8.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-13.

³⁷⁶ UNDRR, *COVID Action Plan. Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020, p. 1.

³⁷⁷ UN-Women, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020; UNESCO, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020; UNDP, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

³⁷⁸ UN-Women, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

³⁸⁰ WHO, *Health emergency and disaster risk management*, 2020.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² UNDP, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

³⁸³ Ibid.; UNDP, *Preparedness & early warning*, 2019.

Additionally, UNESCO and UNDRR are part of the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES), which aims to provide a comprehensive approach to safe school facilities, school disaster risk management, and risk reduction management.³⁸⁴ Civil society organizations (CSOs), in particular nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), are also part of GADRRRES, such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Plan International, and Save the Children.³⁸⁵ IFRC aims to reinforce disaster preparedness, promote the mitigation of the negative impacts of hazards, and protect development from disasters.³⁸⁶ Plan International, an NGO that aims to advance children's rights, works to enhance disaster preparedness through education and school programs.³⁸⁷ Similarly, Save the Children, another NGO that focuses on children's rights, centers their disaster risk reduction efforts on children and provides guidelines for the protection of children in disasters.³⁸⁸ Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Save the Children has provided medical supplies, preparedness training to its partners, and educational schooling to 300,000 children and donating an estimated 6 million meals.³⁸⁹

Developing Local and National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies

National and local disaster risk reduction strategies help monitor the success of disaster risk reduction efforts and determine the roles and responsibilities of relevant actors.³⁹⁰ Disaster risk reduction strategies also identify the technical and financial capacities and how to allocate them.³⁹¹ Furthermore, national disaster risk strategies need to comply with the Sendai Framework, while local disaster risk strategies have to comply with national strategies.³⁹² The Sendai Framework establishes seven targets, out of which target (e) aims to "substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020."³⁹³ However, by May 2019, only 91 national disaster risk reduction strategies were in place.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, these strategies created by states had varying extents of coverage and were not of equal quality.³⁹⁵ For instance, in 2017, only 47 national disaster risk reduction strategies were aligned with principles laid out in the Sendai Framework.³⁹⁶ Out of those 47 strategies, only six national strategies were in full compliance with the Sendai Framework.³⁹⁷ Additionally, local disaster risk reduction strategies were reported by only 42 Member States, out of which only half were in strong compliance with their respective national strategy.³⁹⁸

In its resolution 74/218 (2019), the General Assembly recognized the shortfall on the progress towards target (e) and urged the prioritization of the development of national disaster risk reduction strategies.³⁹⁹ In particular, the General Assembly highlighted the importance of local disaster risk reduction strategies in this regard.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, the General Assembly also urged Member States in its resolution 74/218 to align their national disaster risk reduction strategies with the 2030 Agenda and their climate change

³⁸⁴ UNESCO, *School Safety*, 2017; GADRRRES, *GADRRRES Members*, 2020.

³⁸⁵ GADRRRES, *GADRRRES Members*, 2020.

³⁸⁶ IFRC, *The IFRC's Approach to Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

³⁸⁷ Plan International, *Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaption*, 2019.

³⁸⁸ Save the Children, *Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*, 2020.

³⁸⁹ Save the Children, *Responding to the Coronavirus Outbreak*, 2020.

³⁹⁰ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 316.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

³⁹³ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, pp. 6-7.

³⁹⁴ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/248)*, 2019, p. 4.

³⁹⁵ Planitz, Sendai Target E: Just One More Year to Go, *UNDP*, 2019.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 253.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255.

³⁹⁹ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*, 2019, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

adaption strategies for the *Paris Agreement*.⁴⁰¹ It was noted that a lack of progress on target (e) of the Sendai Framework could potentially endanger the progress on the remaining six targets of the Sendai Framework as well as the SDGs.⁴⁰²

One solution to facilitate further progress on target (e) is capacity building, in particular through regional and international organizations, to assist Member States in developing and implementing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies.⁴⁰³ Additionally, national and local disaster risk reduction strategies are best developed when they are part of a diverse collaboration of different stakeholders, such as representatives from different sectors, NGOs, and academia, among others.⁴⁰⁴ This refers back to an inclusive approach to disaster risk reduction emphasized in the SDGs and the Sendai Framework, but demonstrates the need for more extensive disaster risk planning and capacity.⁴⁰⁵ Lastly, the actual implementation of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies is an additional topic, which further relies on the creation of implementation guidelines, and the mobilization of financial resources for disaster risk reduction and risk-informed development.⁴⁰⁶ Altogether, there is growing need for increased risk reduction capacity, but obstacles to effective implementation continue to hinder full Member State success.⁴⁰⁷

Ensuring Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction

Gender mainstreaming is defined by the UN as a strategy to make diverse people's perspectives and experiences a key part of policy planning, specifically disaster risk reduction action plans, legislation, policies and programs with the goal of promoting equality.⁴⁰⁸ Within the Sendai Framework, gender mainstreaming is part of the guiding principle of inclusivity for disaster risk reduction, and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into disaster preparedness constitutes one crucial pillar of the Sendai Framework.⁴⁰⁹ Additionally, the Sendai Framework recognizes women as key stakeholders within the entire disaster risk reduction process, whose input should be considered in all designing, resourcing and implementing of disaster risk recovery plans.⁴¹⁰ This has been reiterated by the General Assembly in its resolution 74/219 in 2019, which encouraged Member States to include the opinions of women and people with disabilities in the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies, as they face disproportionate risk during disasters.⁴¹¹ Including the perspectives of marginalized communities and empowering these same communities in the policy-making process will help to reduce social vulnerabilities caused by disasters, instead of exacerbating them.⁴¹²

In 2016, UN-Women, together with the Government of Viet Nam, UNDRR, and UNDP, organized the Regional Asia-Pacific Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction, which resulted in the *Ha Noi Recommendations for Action on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction*.⁴¹³ The recommendations build upon the four priorities of the Sendai Framework by developing indicators that are fully gender responsive.⁴¹⁴ For example, the recommendations encourage states to invest in female leadership to

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴⁰² UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: Report of the Secretary-General (A/74/248)*, 2019, p. 4.

⁴⁰³ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 297.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 324.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 328.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ UN-Women, *Gender Mainstreaming*, 2020.

⁴⁰⁹ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, pp. 6, 17.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

⁴¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*, 2019, p. 9.

⁴¹² Ibid.; UN-Women, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

⁴¹³ UN-Women, *Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020.

⁴¹⁴ Regional Asian-Pacific Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction, *Ha Noi Recommendations for Action on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2016, p. 4.

increase overall capacity, and allow women and girls to play a strong and substantive role in disaster risk reduction.⁴¹⁵ The document further recommended the institutionalization of women and diverse groups in disaster preparedness response, recovery and reconstruction leadership at national and local level.⁴¹⁶ The goal of the Ha Noi recommendations is to create a strong regional disaster risk reduction framework that ensures that gender mainstreaming is part of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies.⁴¹⁷

As a relevant current example, COVID-19 has caused significant impact on pre-existing inequalities while also “exposing vulnerabilities in social, political and economic systems which are in turn amplifying the impacts of the pandemic.”⁴¹⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic has also worsened existing poverty and inequality, which means significant implications for the existing DDR framework.⁴¹⁹ UN-Women has advocated for a wide range of economic policies in response to COVID-19 to prepare for immediate and long-term recovery.⁴²⁰ These include “removal of barriers that prevent full involvement of women in economic activities, equal pay and equal opportunities, social protection schemes that factor in existing biases, financing for women entrepreneurs and mechanisms to promote women’s self-employment,” among other social and economic recommendations.⁴²¹

Strengthening International Cooperation on Disaster Risk Reduction

While states themselves have the primary responsibility to reduce disasters, there is also a shared international responsibility, especially when disasters have cross-border impacts.⁴²² International cooperation helps states fill the gaps in their knowledge about disaster risk reduction, and share the burden of recovery.⁴²³ Some countries deal more frequently with disasters, most notably least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), archipelagic countries, and countries with extensive coastlines, due to their proximity to higher-risk geographic markers.⁴²⁴ Because of this, many states that are disaster-prone do not have the capacity to prepare, respond to, and recover from disasters, therefore making international cooperation even more essential.⁴²⁵ The General Assembly has repeatedly encouraged such international dialogue, including in General Assembly resolution 74/218 (2019) which emphasizes that developed states need to fulfill their commitments of official development assistance (ODA) regarding disaster risk reduction, in order to have meaningful partnerships that are fully effective in reducing disaster risk.⁴²⁶

One main focus of international cooperation is in gathering scientific knowledge in order to improve early warning systems for disaster risk reduction and to deepen the understanding of disaster risk.⁴²⁷ For example, standardization of data collection, risk analyses, monitoring systems, and integrated assessments of risk allow for increased effectiveness of international cooperation on disaster risk reduction.⁴²⁸ Furthermore, the Sendai Framework states that international approaches to disaster risk governance and management could be grouped, based on eco-systems, where states with similar or

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴¹⁸ UN Secretary-General, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*, 2020, p. 2.

⁴¹⁹ UNDRR, *Asia-Pacific COVID-19 Brief: Disaster-Responsive Social Protection*, 2020, p. 2.

⁴²⁰ UN Secretary-General, *The Impact of COVID-19 on Women*, 2020, p. 5.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/73/231)*, 2018, p. 7.

⁴²³ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 3.

⁴²⁴ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/73/231)*, 2018, p. 3.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

⁴²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015, p. 10.

⁴²⁸ UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: Report of the Secretary General (A/74/248)*, 2019, p. 5.

shared ecosystems as well as shared resources can work together.⁴²⁹ For example, in the UNDRR *COVID-19 Action Plan (2020)*, Strategic Objective 2 highlights target E of the Sendai Framework that emphasized that “biological hazards (pandemics) are integrated in disaster risk reduction and development planning and programming, including in the development of national and local DRR strategies”.⁴³⁰ This emphasizes the need for international cooperation not just between states, but also between UN bodies, agencies, programs and funds as well as civil society and other stakeholders.⁴³¹

In addition to the technical support, providing financial resources to help develop and implement disaster risk reduction strategies is another form of aid helpful to developing states, in particular LDCs, SIDS, LLDCs.⁴³² The private sector in particular can be a source of additional voluntary funding, which is important to disaster risk reduction in order to offset short-falls in ODA.⁴³³ This highlights the important role the financing for development framework, in particular the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015)*, plays in achieving the targets and priorities of the Sendai Framework.⁴³⁴ The UNDRR Action Plan also urges for partnerships to address the impacts of COVID-19 with a focus on socio-economic impact on vulnerable groups and information to be disseminated to “mitigate its socio-economic impacts and support countries to recover better.”⁴³⁵ UNDRR currently recommends 7 economic and financial considerations to address COVID-19 that are invest in social protection before a disaster; promote universal social protection; integrate universal health coverage and social protection; adopt a human rights-based approach to social protection; strengthen digitization to enhance inclusion; adopt intersectional approaches to reduce vulnerabilities and reduce exclusions; adopt flexible assistance delivery modalities.⁴³⁶

Conclusion

Overall, there has been progress on disaster risk reduction since the 2015 establishment of the Sendai Framework; however current efforts are not on track to meet the 2030 targets.⁴³⁷ Additionally, reducing disaster risk has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, which has been described as a “health crisis; an economic crisis, a humanitarian crisis, a security crisis, and a human rights crisis.”⁴³⁸ International cooperation and the mobilization of development finance, both from the public and the private sectors, will remain important tools for disaster risk reduction, as will increased international cooperation to maintain the momentum of the SDGs.⁴³⁹ The COVID-19 response and recovery efforts may also present a new opportunity to evolve the DRR framework and the international communities approach to mitigating the impact of biological disasters.⁴⁴⁰

Further Research

As delegates begin their research, they should first ask what their Member State already has in regards to a disaster risk reduction plan, and further consider: What tools have been utilized by states to increase gender mainstreaming in disaster risk reduction planning? What have Member States done to prepare for future pandemics and creating successful programs that addresses disaster risk reduction? How can

⁴²⁹ UN General Assembly, *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*, 2015, p. 3.

⁴³⁰ UNDRR, *COVID Action Plan. Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020, p. 1.

⁴³¹ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*, 2019, p. 7.

⁴³² UN General Assembly, *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: Report of the Secretary General (A/74/248)*, 2019, p. 12.

⁴³³ UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*, 2019, p. 9.

⁴³⁴ UN General Assembly, *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*, 2015, p. 20.

⁴³⁵ UNDRR, *COVID Action Plan. Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2020, p. 3.

⁴³⁶ UNDRR, *Asia-Pacific COVID-19 Brief: Disaster-Responsive Social Protection*, 2020, p. 8.

⁴³⁷ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 21.

⁴³⁸ UN General Assembly, *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19*, 2020, p. 1.

⁴³⁹ UNDRR, *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, 2019, p. 21; UN General Assembly, *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/73/231)*, 2018, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁰ UNDRR, *COVID-19: A risk context*, 2020, p. 6.

governments motivate the private sector to participate in the development of local and national capabilities to contribute to disaster risk reduction? Will civil societies continue to sustain assistance programs within the international framework? How can data be better utilized by many states to improve the disaster risk reduction? What does a post-COVID international system would look like? What socioeconomic impacts has COVID-19 created for member states? Is there a method to create a consistent standard of quality for disaster risk reduction plans? How can existing disaster risk reduction standards and implementation of plans be more inclusive, particularly to vulnerable populations? How can existing frameworks and institutions approaches be adapted during a global crisis?

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https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_3_en.pdf

In the October of 2019, the UNDRR released a review by the Joint Inspection Unit on the progress of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This review will provide a valuable and topical resource in discussing the progress of disaster risk reduction methods and how member states capacities has increased or still in need. The document provides an in-depth methodological analysis on the commitment of the UN system on disaster risk reduction, the inclusion of disaster risk reduction in corporate strategic plans, the cross-cutting nature of disaster risk reduction, and the future role of the UNDRR. Delegates will be able to review various recommendations made to the UNDRR and GA for progression of SDGs and other objectives of the Sendai Framework.

United Nations, General Assembly. (2020). *United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19: Saving Lives, Protecting Societies*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from:

https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_comprehensive_response_to_covid-19_june_2020.pdf

The UN released a detailed report to analyze the costs and impacts of COVID-19. From this report, delegates can get a complete overview on the initiatives and objectives of the UN when it comes to addressing the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report is organized around (1) The health response; (2) Humanitarian, human rights, and socioeconomic response; (3) Most marginalized countries and populations; (4) Best practices for recovery; and (5) Resource mobilization, all of which provide extensive information to foster in-depth delegate research. In particular, this report will be useful with capturing the local, state, and global information of the pandemic and provides a framework of understanding the UN's comprehensive response measures and mechanisms.

United Nations Development Programme. (2020). *Disaster Risk Reduction*. Retrieved 23 August 2020 from:

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/planet/disaster-risk-reduction-and-recovery/disaster-risk-reduction.html>

UNDP is an important UN organization which aims to increase international cooperation around disaster risk reduction. From UNDP's website on DRR, delegates can get a comprehensive overview on disaster risk reduction initiatives, and how they intersect with existing development programming. This website is also useful for delegates because it provides links to information on subtopics included in the background guide, and up-to-date stocktaking on global progress made towards the Sendai Framework's goals.

United Nations, Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2019). *2019 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Retrieved 23 August 2020 from: <https://gar.unisdr.org/sites/default/files/gar19distilled.pdf>

The UNDRR produces the Global Assessment Report on a biannual basis. The 2019 Global Assessment Report contains important data on the progress on the targets and priorities of the Sendai Framework, which will be helpful in framing delegate research. This report also emphasizes the impact of disaster risk reduction and showcases best practice examples for delegates on how disaster risk reduction can be effectively

implemented. This report particularly provides best practice examples for effective national and local disaster risk reduction strategies as well as the concrete principles, which each national disaster risk reduction plan should ideally include.

United Nations, Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. (2020). *Initial COVID-19 Engagement Strategy*. Retrieved 20 September 2020 from: <https://www.undrr.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/COVID19%20Action%20Plan%20EXTERNAL.pdf>

UNDRR released an initial COVID-19 Engagement Strategy in May of 2020 addressing the COVID 19 crisis. From their initial engagement plan, delegates will be able to utilize the UNDRR's initial priorities of: (1) Tackling the health emergency; (2) Societal impact and the economic response and recovery; and (3) Recover better, to understand how the initial response framework to COVID-19 was created. This document will also be a useful resource for delegates in understanding how the UNDRR frames their approach to analysis, knowledge-exchange, partnership, and advocacy in response to an immediate crisis.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fourth session. (2019). *Disaster Risk Reduction (A/RES/74/218)*. Adopted on the report of the Second Committee (A/74/218/Add.3). Retrieved 23 August 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/74/218>

This resolution is the most recent General Assembly resolution on disaster risk reduction. As the main task of the General Assembly within the Sendai Framework is to review the progress on disaster risk reduction, this source provides delegates with an understanding of how the General Assembly approaches its mandate. Additionally, within this resolution, the progress towards key international frameworks such as Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Rio Declaration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Paris Agreement is emphasized. The resolution further highlights the importance of developing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies as well as gender mainstreaming and international cooperation in disaster risk reduction, which delegates will find useful to framing their own draft resolutions.

United Nations, General Assembly, Sixty-ninth session. (2015). *Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. Retrieved 23 August 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/a/res/69/283>

The Sendai Framework is the current UN framework on disaster risk reduction and is the most frequently referenced document in the international system on disaster risk reduction. The framework contains indicators and targets for disaster risk reduction useful in measuring progress. The implementation of the Sendai Framework informs the work of not only governments, but also NGOs and UN agencies, funds and programs. It will be important for delegates to understand the various priority areas of the Sendai Framework as well as its targets in order to assess the current progress on global, national, and local disaster risk reduction efforts.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-fifth session. (2020). *Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 Report of the Secretary-General (A/75/226)*. Retrieved 25 October 2020 from: <https://undocs.org/A/75/226>

This document is the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the “Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030” (A/75/226). It provides insights on the current progress on the implementation of the Sendai Framework and informs the draft resolution of the Second Committee on the sub-agenda item “Disaster Risk Reduction.” There is a particular focus on the El Niño phenomenon’s impacts, most recent data reported by Members Stats on national disaster risk reduction priorities, and the importance of strengthening disaster risk governance. The report details that, while some progress has been made, more action is required, and a failure to achieve the

targets of the Sendai Framework could threaten the global progress towards the SDGs. Delegates should look to this document to form their proposals for the conference.

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