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Humanitarian Response to Pandemics and Other Health Crises

Following the outbreak of the influenza strain H1N1 (commonly known as “swine flu”) in 2009, the United Nations Medical Directors, along with the assistance of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other medical experts, revised the original Pandemic Guidelines in place to ensure that appropriate preparative and response measures are taken when combatting and controlling pandemics. An agency of the United Nations, the World Health Organization plays a significant role in the prevention of outbreaks as well as treatment for HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases that affect large geographical regions. Although there are international guidelines and health measures in effect, pandemics often affect regions differently according to the climate, healthcare, and technology of that specific region or nation. Equitable distribution of healthcare services, especially to poor and rural areas, is vital when preventing the spread of pandemics. Sanitation and cleanliness, especially in terms of potable water, are crucial, as lack thereof can lead to global outbreaks and promote the rapid spread of communicable diseases, especially those that are water-borne.

Frameworks and Guidelines

The United Nations recognizes the direct link between health matters and socioeconomic downfall. Weakened state institutions, the dramatic increase in the

number of orphans, and setbacks on economic development are just a few examples of the negative effects of pandemics.¹ Since the beginning of 21st century, the Security Council has considered pandemics a threat to international peace and security. In 2014, the Security Council adopted S/RES/2177 in response to the Ebola outbreak. Paulo Portas, Portugal's Foreign Minister, encouraged the "integration of the fight against pandemics into the peacebuilding strategies of post-conflict countries,"² implying that the effects of a pandemic will reverse the newly found peace of these nations. In 2011, resolution 1983 incorporated AIDS awareness into peacekeeper training.

In April of 2000, a meeting was held in Geneva to discuss the need for a global network to deal with emerging diseases and global outbreaks. There, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) was established. Under the authority of the World Health Organization, GOARN aims to "combat the international spread of outbreaks, ensure that technical assistance reaches affected states rapidly, and contribute to long-term preparedness and capacity building."³ GOARN receives resources from scientific institutions in Member States, organizations of the United Nations such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Humanitarian Committee for Refugees (UNHCR), the Red Cross, and various nongovernmental organizations such as Doctors Without Borders. The WHO also has International Health Regulations (IHR) in place. 196 countries agreed to adhere to these regulations, which are to "build their capacities to detect, assess and report public health events."⁴ IHR also

¹ "In Hindsight: The Security Council and Health Crises," last modified September 30, 2014, http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2014-10/in_hindsight_the_security_council_and_health_crises.php

² "Security Council and Health Crises"

³ "Global Alert and Response Network (GOARN)," 2005.

⁴ "About IHR," 2005.

includes regulations applicable to “ports, airports and ground crossings to limit the spread of health risks to neighboring countries.”⁵ In addition, these regulations are designed to educate the public on certain health risks, food safety, and travel safety. IHR also has an emergency committee designed to give advice to the WHO Director-General when a public health emergency of international concern or PHEIC is occurring, such as in the recent case of Ebola. Guiding Principles for International Outbreak Alert and Response ensures that appropriate experts respond to the affected areas as quickly as possible. They place great importance on coordination and details concerning information. This framework also relies on NGOs, who reach out to neglected areas during pandemics. The WHO also ensures that “all responses will proceed with full respect for ethical standards, human rights, national and local laws, and cultural sensitivities and traditions.”⁶ The Emergency Response Framework determines their plan of action bases on grades: grade one affects one or more countries, but requires little action by the WHO; grade two requires a moderate response and an Emergency Support Team starts to get involved; and grade three requires an extensive response, with external and internal support and Emergency Support Team involvement. Currently there are 18 countries or areas of concern that are under a grade 2 or 3.

The WHO collects data concerning “mortality, disease, and health system indicators including life expectancy, illnesses and deaths from key diseases, health services and treatments, financial investment in health, [and] risk factors and behaviors

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Guiding Principles for International Outbreak Alert and Response,” 2015.

that affect health”⁷ from 194 countries known as the World Health Statistics. UNICEF, a key partner, specifically focuses on reaching out to the most excluded children worldwide. Both of these organizations agree that the main issue regarding healthcare is inequality. WHO and UNICEF both aim to focus on neglected areas’ (mainly poor and rural communities) innovative technology, and affordable sanitation solutions. Together, they have created a Joint Monitoring Program for Water Supply and Sanitation, which “monitor[s] country, regional, and global progress,”⁸ placing an importance on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sanitation and Lack of Water

Currently worldwide, “1 in 3 people are still without sanitation facilities.”⁹ Sanitation, specifically clean water, is vital when preventing the spread of disease, especially when it comes to pandemics. Contaminated water carries diseases such as cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, hepatitis A, typhoid, and polio. Over 800,000 adult and 300,000 children deaths could have been prevented if sanitation systems were improved. Lack of sanitation also transmits neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) including trachoma and soil transmitted helminthes, otherwise known as intestinal worms. NTDs infect “[over] 1.5 million people in 149 countries.”¹⁰ Over a period of 15 years, “91% of the global population now has improved drinking water.”¹¹ Even with this drastic improvement, the MDG target on access to basic sanitation has missed its goal by about

⁷ “World Health Statistics reports on global health goals for 194 countries,” May 13, 2015.

⁸ “Lack of sanitation for 2.4 billion people is undermining health improvements,” June 30, 2015.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

700 million people. African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions continue to fall short in meeting MDGs. Sanjay Wijesekera, head of UNICEF's global water, sanitation, and hygiene programs, suggests that the ambitious goal of universal access to sanitation by 2030 will only be possible "if we ensure the poorest start making progress right away."¹² Improved drinking water doesn't always equate to clean drinking water. "Improved drinking water is defined as a facility/delivery point that protects water from external contamination ex piped water into a dwelling, public tap or standpipe."¹³ Therefore, this water could still be contaminated during transport or be home to vectors (insects that breed in clean water). Simple education of covering containers can "reduce vector breeding and may also have a co-benefit of reducing fecal contamination of water at the household level."¹⁴ In September of 2015, the United Nations General Assembly will discuss the goal of "eliminating open defecation by 2030."¹⁵ Due to lack of drinking water, lack of nutrition becomes a cause of concern as well. Annually, "over 7.5 million children under the age of 5 die due to malnutrition and preventable diseases."¹⁶ About 360,000 of these deaths could have been prevented if adequate sanitation systems were in place. Climate change continues to put pressure on water supply systems. If trends continue, in ten years, "half of the world's population will be living in water-stressed areas."¹⁷ The WHO developed a series of water quality guidelines in order to prevent risks prior to contamination and has been testing water treatment products since 2014.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "Drinking-water," June 2015.

¹⁵ "Lack of Sanitation Undermining Health Improvements"

¹⁶ Anup Shah, "Health Issues," *Global Issues*. September 27, 2014.

¹⁷ "Drinking Water"

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is an ongoing pandemic that affects more than 35 million people worldwide. Human Immunodeficiency Virus weakens the immune system, making it imperative for affected individuals to receive appropriate nutrition and clean water. So much as the common cold can have fatal effects on an HIV patient, but “tuberculosis is the leading cause of death among HIV [patients],”¹⁸ killing nearly 360,000 a year. New HIV infection rates have gone down from 2001 by more than 1 million people, but many patients still do not receive adequate care. A goal of universal access to treatment for HIV patients appears hindered by the fact that demand for antiretroviral therapy is higher than expected. Even though infection rates have decreased, demand for treatment continues to surpass supply. One way HIV is transmitted is by contaminated needles, syringes, and other sharp instruments. Worldwide, “15% of patients develop an infection during a hospital stay.”¹⁹ If medical professionals and employees were better educated about the spread of infection and contamination, that percentage could significantly decrease.

Ebola Outbreak as a representation of weak healthcare systems

During the Ebola outbreak, scientists analyzed the capacity of health systems, as well as medical procedures and patterns in some of the most impacted countries. A study of a district in Uganda, known as Masindi, led scientists to draw several conclusions of possible sources of error in medical protocol. Lack of isolation wards, employees, and space in the local hospitals led to increased risk of contamination. Movements of the patients to different areas were very loosely controlled, and “blood samples [were] taken

¹⁸ “HIV/AIDS,” July 2015.

¹⁹ “Drinking Water”

without being isolated.”²⁰ Infection of nurses were most likely due to violations of protocol such as not wearing protective equipment when cleaning out the ambulances or washing soiled linen of patients, and answering cell phones in the contaminated sections of the Ebola ward. Medical records of these patients were also contaminated in the process and as a result, later destroyed.

In Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, health systems did not meet performance standards and failed to prevent or delay the spread of Ebola. Low employment, coupled with weak “infrastructure, logistics, health information, surveillance, governance, and drug supply systems,”²¹ also contributed to this failure. Another common factor between these nations was insufficient government funds devoted to healthcare systems. This could be a result of the allocation of funds to fight HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis. Governments also tend to focus on reducing transmission and symptom control after confirmation of the infection rather than screening and testing possible carriers prior to infection. If tested and confirmed negative for the Ebola Virus, these individuals “still need to be treated [for fear that] they will travel to seek care for unrelated conditions in areas they perceive to be Ebola-free.”²² As a result, these individuals seeking care in unsanitary healthcare facilities put themselves at risk for infection. This cycle puts stress on these areas, therefore possibly resulting in death from “a breakdown of health

²⁰ Matthias Borchert et al., “Ebola haemorrhagic fever outbreak in Masindi District, Uganda: outbreak description and lessons learned” *BMC Infectious Disease* 11 (2011): doi:10.1186/1471-2334-11-357

²¹ Marie-Paule Kieny et al., “Health-system resilience: reflections on the Ebola crisis in western Africa” *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* 2014;92:850. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2471/BLT.14.149278>

²² Kieny, “Health-system resilience.”

services”²³ rather than the actual epidemic. Overall, discounting organization, education, and attention to protocol can be (and has been) fatal.

Summary

The United Nations places great importance on the containment and control of pandemics, as it is considered an international security matter. Mainly through the World Health Organization, a series of guidelines have been established to deal with preparative and response measures and containment of diseases. Although infection rates of ongoing pandemics such as HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis have dropped over the past decade, infection and inadequate nutrition could be prevented through improved sanitation systems as well as hygiene education. Contaminated water appears as a source of the transmission of communicable diseases, especially pandemics. The UN has set several Millennium Development Goals hoping to increase access of treatment for HIV patients, as well as clean drinking water and sufficient sanitation. The recent outbreak of Ebola, specifically in least developed countries, has brought to attention the extreme importance of clean, efficient, and accessible healthcare facilities. Nongovernmental organizations serve a substantial purpose, focusing their attention on poor rural areas, most of which are neglected otherwise. With current trends pointing towards water scarcity and a population boom in the near future, it is becoming more and more crucial to address these global health issues.

²³ Ibid.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should governments allocate more funds to healthcare facilities in order to be better prepared for pandemics?
2. How do you propose rural areas receive the access and assistance they need regarding healthcare and sanitation systems?
3. Should the UN set new training guidelines for hospitals, other healthcare facilities, and medical professionals help stop the spread of preventable diseases?
4. Should ongoing pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis receive more or less aid than capacity building in preparation for outbreaks such as Ebola?
5. Do the Sustainable Development Goals accurately focus on the most urgent issues at hand?

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Reviewing the Responsibility to Protect and Other Protection Mechanisms

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is an ongoing debate in the United Nations (UN) since the 1990's, when horrific violence broke out among the states of Rwanda, Yugoslavia and Somalia. In 2001 the International Commission on Intervention and States Sovereignty (ICISS) formed and created their own report on the R2P. The report focused less on the moral and legal obligations, but instead focused on the responsibility for all states to protect people at risk.²⁴ At the 2005 World Summit, the General Assembly (GA) adopted Resolution A/RES/60/1, listed in paragraphs 138-139, outlines the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes (mass atrocities). In 2006, the Security Council (SC) formalized their support of R2P, as long as military force was a last resort. In 2009, the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/677) dealt with the implementation of the responsibility to protect and the continuance of debate on the subject at hand.

The goal of R2P is to create an international community that will help aid in preventing mass atrocity crimes using diplomatic, humanitarian, and other peaceful means.²⁵ Written in current resolutions is no mention of using these peaceful means in the

²⁴ Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

²⁵ "Ibid"

cases of climate change, disease, human security, or harmful and ruinous state policies, such as suspension of civil liberties, endemic poverty and mass corruption.²⁶

Mass Atrocities

Atrocity crimes fall under four extreme human rights abuses: genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. R2P is listed under these four categories, which would have to occur in order for international intervention. Genocide is the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. Ethnic cleansing is the force removal of populations using methods of rape, killing, torture and the like. Crimes against humanity encompasses extermination, enslavement, deportation, torture, rape, extreme forms of discrimination, and other acts of suffering. War crimes focuses on torture, hostage-taking, mistreatment of prisoners, targeting of civilians, pillage, rape, sexual slavery, and intentional use of starvation.²⁷ All of which are clearly defined through the International Criminal Court (ICC).

R2P would cover each crime, as stated in Resolution A/63/677, even in the case of civil wars and internal conflicts. Dr. Edward Luck and Dr. Jennifer Welsh (the special advisors on R2P) agreed that international intervention should only occur in such cases and that a war should not stop other countries from helping innocent civilians. Dr. Edward Luck pointed out that the most killings to ever happen in a period of time was during World War II, The Holocaust, and if an R2P had been in effect, multiple lives could have been saved.²⁸

²⁶ “Ibid”

²⁷ “Ibid”

²⁸ Responsibility to Protect. Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994

Beginning in the early 1990's, the Hutus (Bantu farming people in Rwanda and Burundi)²⁹ and Tutsis (very tall, slender cattle raising people of Rwanda)³⁰ began a strained relationship over economic, social, and political pressures. Constantly, the Tutsis blamed the Hutus for the constant political stress and on April 6, 1994, President Habyarimana, who was a Hutu, was shot down in a plane and the Hutus were blamed because this would give them the ammunition they needed in order to start a war with the Tootsies and have ultimate power lay within the Hutus. This started an automatic war between the two and what began as ethnic cleansing quickly turned into a mass genocide. Hutus began invading the homes of innocents, raping, murdering, and torturing anyone, even if they were not Tutsi. Over 800,000 men and women were killed and only around 200,000 were considered Tutsi.³¹

The United States, Belgium, France, and all other UN countries were aware of what was happening, but nothing took place. The United States was afraid of the demand for intervention because of a possible outbreak of war so they reframed from calling the Rwanda violence for what it was -- genocide. The fighting only ended when the Tutsi rebel group RPF (the Rwandan Patriotic Front) defeated the Hutu regime one hundred days later.³² However, interference could have been done before the attack even happened. It is estimated that in 1990, Hutus began training their youth in combat in response to the formation of the RPF. It is believed that the Hutus shot down their own

²⁹ Dictionary.com (Accessed September 10, 2015).

³⁰ "Ibid"

³¹ United Human Rights Council. United Human Rights Council. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

³² "Ibid"

president in order to begin the ethnic cleansing of the Tutsi power, yet no nation intervened for fear of breaching state sovereignty.

The Kosovo War of 1998

The wars of Yugoslavia were ongoing, and ethnic cleansing was taking place in Kosovo. The Serbian president, Milan Milutinović, did not want Albanians living in Kosovo and decided it was time for something to be done. Canada and neighboring nations gave Albanians a place of solemn, a place where they could be safe from the violence taking place in their homeland. In Kosovo, President Milutinović ordered that any Albanian who did not comply too be killed, which led to three massacres that the people of Kosovo cannot help but remembering in vivid detail.

The Poklek Massacre resulted in the death of forty-seven men, women and children. A group of Serbians forced these people into a small room and opened fire, among them twenty-three were children below the age of fifteen. One of the most known massacres of Kosovo was the Garden Massacre. Nineteen women and their children were lined up against a fence while the Serbian soldiers, using machine-guns, opened fire. There were four known survivors of this. Last, but not least, the Račak massacre was one the Albanians will never forget. Serbian security force purposefully went into central Kosovo, Račak, and opened fire, which resulted in forty-five casualties.³³

NATO (The North Atlantic Treaty Organization) intervened in 1999, but not until after around 1500 Albanians had been killed and an estimated 400,000 had been forced from their homes. When NATO entered Serbia, they set up base and committed air campaigns that would last for seventy-eight days. NATO helped refugees escape into

³³ 1999 - A Documentary about Kosovo War and Ethnic Cleansing. YouTube. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

neighboring countries, and helped pay for flights to help those into Canada, who graciously opened up their borders to Albanians.³⁴ There was a debate on whether NATO should or should not have intervened, or whether, if NATO should have intervened sooner. If NATO had intervened, many of lives may have ben saved, however, the opposite reaction could have occurred a war had broken out due to breaking state sovereignty.

The Three Pillars

In Resolution A/63/677, the Secretary-General lays out a three pillar program. This program explains when each state should and should not intervene, and how drastic the measure should be. The Secretary-General references the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document during these steps, introduces how every case of mass killings had warning signs, and that either these signals of trouble were completely ignored or that the UN, with its intergovernmental organs, failed to do its part in maintaining the peace between nations.

Pillar one deals with the need for each state to address the problems of genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes through appropriate and necessary means. The obligations of these States will be mandated through pre-existing treaties and customary international law, which will be carried out in accordance with the ICC. States also need to focus on creating a training, education program in order to

³⁴ Justice for Kosovo - Massacre at Cuska. Justice for Kosovo - Massacre at Cuska. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

maintain stability throughout its nation. This pledge has been adopted by the General Assembly and reaffirmed by the Security Council at the summit level.³⁵

Pillar two focuses on international intervention and when that should occur. It is stated that the international community should help and encourage states to exercise their right to protect and to provide aid in acts of genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. In addition, states may ask for aid in battling the crises or conflicts before they even occur. This will create states that are more dependent on their civilians rather than on their military. Reiterating that military force is not meant to be the primary form of aid from international states, pillar two encourages using all forms of peaceful communication beforehand, leaving military force only to be used as a last resort.³⁶

Pillar three teaches the process on how to deal with a state manifestly failing in a decisive and timely manner. While one or more mass atrocity crimes are being committed, the main goal is to save lives, and in order to do this, states cannot barge in using tanks, nuclear weapons, and machinery. Doing so will likely end in war and more casualties, such as with Somalia and the Congo. On-site investigations will need to be made, and fact-finding missions will be created. If no peaceful means can be agreed upon, then government sanctions may be placed before any other action is created, and

³⁵ United Nations, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly. UN News Center. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

³⁶ United Nations, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly. UN News Center. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

the selling of arms to such a nation will end. If all three pillars fail, then the Security Council will step in. and consider the use of military force.³⁷

Pillar one allows other states to address the issues happening in said nation and to investigate. Pillar two allows for peaceful solutions to be found and if not for state intervention to take place. Pillar three teaches how to deal with pillars one and two and letting the nation say when they have had enough. So in conjunction with pillars one, two and three, peace can be made between states without breaking state sovereignty.

Crisis in Syria

In March of 2011, peaceful protests began in Syria and quickly escalated into mass destruction by the summer. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad refused to put a halt to the violence erupting in his state and blamed the armed groups and terrorists for what was happening, yet denied humanitarian aid to his civilians. Rebel groups began to form such as the Syrian National Council (SNC), Exiled Syrians, and Free Syrian Army (FSA), with the goal to overrule the government and stop chaos. Between August of 2011 and July 2012, over 19,000 casualties had been counted and tens of thousands of displaced citizens were in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. In November of 2012, the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Force was created and seen as the legitimate representation of the Syrian people. This group was recognized by other nations such as the United States (U.S.) United Kingdom (UK), The Arab League, France and the European Union (EU).³⁸ However, it became divided by barriers between Islamic and secular armed groups and did not last.

³⁷ United Nations, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly. UN News Center. (Accessed July 20, 2015).

³⁸ Crisis in Syria. Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed September 22, 2015).

Government attacks began to shift from sporadic violence to massive killing. In July of 2012, there were an estimated 108 civilians killed in Houla and in January of 2013, there was a massacre in Aleppo that led to the deaths of 71 men. It was rumored that Syria had created new chemical weapons accountable for the casualties of 500-20,000 people, including children, in Ghouta and another 1600 in Aleppo.³⁹ On August 31, 2013 there was clear and convincing evidence in Ghouta of Sarin Gas, which led the Secretary-General on September 16, 2013 to announce the tragedy as a war crime. The U.S. was positive the Assad regime was behind the mass-killings considered military operations with France. On September 14, 2013 a verdict was reached between the U.S. and Russia to remove and destroy all chemical weapons found in Syria by June of 2014 creating Resolution 2118. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was formed and in charge of eliminating the chemical weapons. The Syrian regime complied and by April 2014, 1/3 of the Syrian chemical weapons were found and destroyed⁴⁰.

In March of 2014, the commission of investigation confirmed around 17 counts of mass killing in Syria.⁴¹ Since March of 2011 the death toll in Syria has reached 310,000, which is 1-1.3% of the population, and another 3.9 million have been displaced in neighboring countries; Turkey has taken 1.7 million, Lebanon 1.2 million, Jordan 625,000 and Iraq 245,000 refugees.⁴² Responses have been made but none in accordance with the responsibility to protect. The League of Arab Nations created a peace plan that

³⁹ Crisis in Syria. Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed September 22, 2015).

⁴⁰ Crisis in Syria. Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed September 22, 2015).

⁴¹ Crisis in Syria. Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed September 22, 2015).

⁴² Double the Death Toll: Anyone Care about Syria? CNN. April 18, 2015. (Accessed September 22, 2015).

failed, placed economic sanctions, along with EU, and urged the Security Council to take action. In the United Nations, the Human Rights Council committed investigations, the GA condemned conflicting escalation and have made efforts of peace and the SC condemned terrorist's attacks in Aleppo and passed Res. 2118 and 2165.⁴³

Summary

The Holocaust, Rwandan Genocide, Kosovo's Ethnic Cleansing and the Crisis in Syria are prime examples of needs for the R2P. While the Holocaust dealt with all four mass atrocities, nothing was solved until acts of war were committed. During the Rwandan Genocide, so many lives were taken due to genocide and ethnic cleansing, if there had been an international intervention system set up, the casualties would not have been as grave. Furthermore, NATO intervention would have been unnecessary if neighboring countries had sent aid to Kosovo, without worry of breaking their state sovereignty.

The three pillar initiative is an excellent start to creating an R2P resolution. By explaining what the states' rights are with R2Ps and their citizens, how the international community could help send aid, and stating when military use is acceptable, R2P will help abolish the dangers of impeding on state sovereignty. However, there are conceptual, institutional, and political problems surrounding the topic of R2Ps. The UN will continue to work on a resolution in which all states can agree and where all major bodies feel protected without rights being violated.

⁴³ Crisis in Syria. Responsibility to Protect. (Accessed September 22, 2015).

Questions

1. Has your nation implemented any actions to use R2Ps?
2. Does the ICC need to be more involved? Why or why not?
3. What can be implemented to allow more nations to agree upon the same resolution?
4. Should R2Ps only effect neighboring countries, and not countries across seas? Why or why not?
5. What other factors need to be taken into account when creating a resolution on R2Ps?
6. Should Acts of War be counted under R2Ps? Why or why not?
7. Should military force be included in any resolution?
8. Has your Nation dealt with anything involving R2Ps?
9. Should anything else be added to mass atrocities crime list?
10. What other alternatives should be offered prior to military use?

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Addressing Global Financial Risk

Introduction

A hallmark of contemporary global concerns remains the alarm surrounding a slowing world economy. As woes from the 2007/2008 global financial crisis loom, as well as the flashbacks to those years, in the form of tanking oil prices, currency controversies, a weak global economy, as well as geopolitical tensions, not to mention Greece's current economic disaster, and synonymously Japan, all relay a message of importance for this issue. Furthermore, instability in Russia, the stagnation experienced by not only Greece and all countries in Europe, the United States' consumer debt worth 3.2 trillion, and the uncertainty in China all relate to the troubles the global economy is facing.¹ Reactions to these issues by the Federal Reserve and central banks around the world, although useful for the time being, may possibly only be useful as a short-term "band-aid" for the risk of falling back into a period of economic crisis. A new report published by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in April of 2015 stated that global

¹ McBride & Park . "4 Expert Predictions for the Global Economy in 2015." Last modified December 26, 2014.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/12/4-expert-predictions-for-the-global-economy-in-2015/384061/>

financial stability risks have risen since October of 2014 further showing the possibility of an economic downturn.²

Historical Context of the Risk

The history of global financial risk can be seen via the global financial stability risk report, courtesy of the IMF. Starting in September 2007, global financial stability endured a crucial test. Credit and market risks rose as markets became fraught and extremely unpredictable. Credit discipline deteriorated in the years preceding, especially in the United States' nonprime mortgage and leveraged loan markets, but this occurred in other related credit markets too. In April 2008, the IMF noted that the events of the economic crisis during the six months in between the two reports represented a clear demonstration of how fragile the global financial system is. Moreover, it raised fundamental questions about the effectiveness of the response by private and public sector institutions.³

The report published in October 2008 reflects the continuing turmoil the financial markets worldwide were experiencing. It notes that internationally coherent and decisive policy measures will be required to restore confidence in the global financial system. April 2009 is a crucial report as the global financial system was still under extreme stress and the crisis began to effect households, corporations, and the banking sectors in both advanced and emerging market countries. Fast-forward to April 2010, risks to global financial stability lessened as economic recovery started to show. April 2011's report noted that economic recovery and improvements in global financial stability were

² International Monetary Fund. "Global Financial Stability Report." Last modified June 29, 2015. www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/

³ International Monetary Fund. "Global Financial Stability Report." Last modified June 29, 2015. www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/

ongoing, but structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities remained in some important financial systems. In September 2011, the crisis had moved into its fifth year and the economic struggle coupled with a political controversy as differences within and across economies started to impede progress. Unable to streamline the ability to address the economic issues at hand, long-term investors moved their money toward safety and liquidity. After calling for fiscal reform and analyzing the unconventional monetary policies of the Federal Reserve, the Bank of England, the Bank of Japan, the European Central Bank, and the U.S. Federal Reserve, the April 2014 Report delineates the fact that the global financial system was undergoing the path to greater stability.

The last and most current report notes some important points. First, the Report states that stability risks have increased since October. The risks have pivoted away from banks to shadow banks, from solvency to market liquidity risks, and from advanced economies to emerging markets.⁴ When it comes to advanced economies, a paramount challenge is enhancing the ability of accommodative monetary policies to gain traction while ensuring a smooth normalization of monetary policy in the U.S., as well as managing the undesirable side effects of low interest rates.

Emerging markets must rely on their own ability to address their own domestic financial vulnerabilities ranging from weaker growth, lower commodity prices, and a stronger dollar. This is important because while strengthening their own resilience to the changing global environment is important, as established markets gain strength and as their dollar gains value, the emerging markets suffer from the inability to do business

⁴ International Monetary Fund. “Global Financial Stability Report.” Last modified June 29, 2015. www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/

with those who have a more valued dollar. This inconsistency is also essential in addressing global financial risk.

How Have Countries Addressed These Issues?

Many countries have taken steps towards addressing the risks their own country faces. For example, The European Central Bank and the Bank of Japan have sought out daring monetary policies to reverse renewed disinflationary pressures. These moves have already shown measurable signs of success as financing costs have fallen in the euro area, equity prices have surged, and the euro and the yen have depreciated significantly, which helps support inflation expectations.⁵

China, which has racked up \$28 trillion in debt, is making a few moves to stabilize its market. The security regulator has promised an approximately \$19.3 trillion, courtesy of 21 brokerages, to stabilize the market.⁶ Furthermore, the People's Bank of China agreed to provide liquidity support for the margin-trading clearinghouse.

What Has the United Nations Done?

The UN has addressed global financial risks in many ways. In response to the crisis that Greece has experienced, Juan Pablo Bohoslavsky, the UN Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, warned the European Union (EU) that, "If there is no compromise, Greece may sooner or later default, making the crisis...even worse." The crisis that Greece has experienced translates into detrimental effects on health care and

⁵ José Viñals. "Financial Risks Rise Amid Uneven Global Recovery." Last modified June 15, 2015. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jose-vinals/financial-risks-rise-amid_b_7073274.html

⁶ Gwynn Guilford. "To Save Its Stock Markets, China is Putting Its Whole Financial System at Risk." Last modified July 6, 2015. <http://qz.com/445477/to-save-its-stock-markets-china-is-putting-its-whole-financial-system-at-risk/>

education since financial woes put stress on those areas via taxes and cuts.⁷ The UN has also published a 19-point report, created by Nobel Prize winner, Joseph E. Stiglitz, regarding the steps needed to be taken towards a new global economic compact. These, “Principles for Addressing the Current Global Financial Crisis and Beyond,” contain numerous solutions and measures to aid and reverse the current crisis.⁸

Why Global Financial Risk a Contentious Issue

Global financial risk is a contentious issue simply because every country around the world is affected by the current negative economic trends. The current risks to financial stability are harder to spot, and shift within the global economy. Emerging economies are suffering more than advanced economies, but even with this being said, one major risk revolves around oil. The drop in the price of oil and other commodities is creating problems in emerging market-exporting countries, many of which have borrowed heavily on the basis of projected revenue, for instance, countries in South America.⁹ Moreover, many corporations exposed to foreign currency debt are already weak, and therefore, could impact banks that are in many cases themselves, weak. With some national currencies being much stronger than others, emerging markets struggle to continue to do business with established and advanced economies.

The financial risks experienced by many major economies also result in geopolitical strains. Greece has experienced economic and political crises, the Eurozone

⁷ OHCHR. “UN Expert Urges Greece and Global Financial Institutions to Reach Debt Deal that Respects Human Rights.” Last modified June 2, 2015.

www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51037#.VaVCQcZViko

⁸ Joseph E. Stiglitz. “Towards A New Global Economic Compact.”

www.un.org/ga/president/63/commission/principles_current_global_fcrcrisis.pdf

⁹ Darrell Delamaide. “IMF Says Global Financial Risks Harder to Spot.”

usatoday.com/story/money/business/2015/04/15/delamaide

only recently escaping a major deflation threat, like that of Japan, not to mention the fact that Russian and Ukrainian economies are in shambles, it is of the utmost importance for those countries who have recently avoided major economic trouble to continue towards, ideally, future prosperity. Contentious elections in the United Kingdom (UK), Spain, Portugal, Finland, and Denmark further the economic worries in Europe. Geopolitical concerns come to the mind of many, as the strain from borrowing, or lending, becomes a hallmark of economic troubles. With exports being a crucial form of revenue to many emerging-market countries, but imports costing too much because of a weaker currency, many countries are trying to find ways to cope with the current global financial issues.

The United States is approximately \$21,694 trillion in debt, and growing,¹⁰ China's debt is twice the size of its GDP,¹¹ and even Canada has found itself in the midst of a recession,¹² but as some global superpowers suffer, other countries are experiencing positive outcomes. For example, India's economy has been labeled the "best of the BRICs," and oil prices dropping are providing an even more positive outlook.¹³ Israel has kept unemployment low and after a brief period of slowed economic growth, its economy has picked up speed.

¹⁰ Presented by: Christopher Chantrill. "Total U.S. Government Debt in 2015." Last modified July 14, 2015 <http://www.usgovernmentdebt.us/>

¹¹ David Scutt. "China's Debt Is Now Twice the Size of its Gross Domestic Product." Last modified July 15, 2015. <http://www.businessinsider.com/chinas-debt-is-growing-faster-than-its-economy-2015-7>

¹² Chris Sorensen and Aaron Hutchins. "How Canada's Economy Went From Boom to Recession so Fast." Last modified July 15, 2015. <http://www.macleans.ca/economy/economicanalysis/how-canadas-economy-went-from-boom-to-recession-so-fast/>

¹³ Jennifer Curry. "India's Economy is the "Best of the BRICs." Last modified July 13, 2015. <http://www.businessinsider.com/india-economic-growth-2015-7>

Global financial risk is a major issue that needs to be addressed at the United Nations because of the fluctuation and polemical trends occurring between levels of economic struggle and success experienced from country to country. The instability involved in emerging markets and less developed nations, as well as in national superpowers, also known as, the advanced markets, is a striking example of the global financial risks and troubles. Understanding the issues at hand, adapting to them, and pending a country's current economic standing, helping other countries bolster their economy is a considerable, yet idealistic, plan of action. The contentious issue of global financial risk is an extensive, intricate, and even convoluted task for the globe to tackle at the United Nations.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is your country's current economic standing? Is it doing well, is it suffering, is it at a standstill?
2. If your country is experiencing economic troubles, what is causing these issues? Are they resulting from dropping oil prices, trade problems, or even spending deficits?
3. If your country, like that of India, is experiencing a period of growth, why? What is bolstering and pushing your economy forward?
4. How can an advanced, or even a country that isn't experiencing economic failures, aid, or help through planning, an emerging market, or a country facing economic woes?
5. What are the possible consequences of not fixing the current global financial risks, globally and for your own country?
6. What can the United Nations do to help with this issue?

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www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51037#.VaVCQcZViko

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South-South Cooperation For Development

Introduction

For hundreds of years, the developing countries, also known as southern countries, have been relying on the developed northern countries for support in politics, economics, socioeconomics, development, technology, etc. For example, one reason that many of the underdeveloped nations of Africa have a hard time getting out of poverty is because of the excessive amount of debt that they are in due to the huge loans that wealthy nations have lent them and have accrued compound interest. Until this debt is paid, which it won't because of the interest it accrues, the nations cannot begin to focus on other areas of development such as social, economic, or human. Therefore, those nations will continue to remain underdeveloped, and dependent upon the Global North¹⁴. The Global North consists mainly of North America, Western Europe, and the more developed countries of Eastern Asia. The Global South is mainly consistent of some countries in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and the developing sovereign states in Asia. There is great divide between the Global North and South that hasn't been brought to attention until recent decades. Statistically, 4/5 of the permanent five Security Council Members are a part of the Global North, 95% of the Global North have food,

14 "Dependency Theories." Boundless. Accessed September 19, 2015.

<https://www.boundless.com/sociology/textbooks/boundless-sociology-textbook/global-stratification-and-inequality-8/sociological-theories-and-global-inequality-72/dependency-theories-428-8541/>.

shelter, and a working education system. The North earns 4/5 of the entire World's income, and even though the South is the main source of raw materials for manufacturing industries, those industries are owned and located in the North. The Global South lacks political stability and sufficient access to the remainder of the World's income.¹⁵

Therefore, a history of reliance on the Global North/developed member states has created a trend that the United Nations is trying to break by getting the developing nations to work together, and become more reliant upon each other as well as the developed nations to create a more balanced system. To help, General Assembly established a special unit within the United Nations Development Programme to promote technical cooperation among developing cooperation.

Historical Analysis of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation

In 1949, technical aid was originally orchestrated in the United Nation by UNESCO when the United Nations recognized that it was becoming more and more prevalent that there were member states that were in need of services that their own governments could not give them on their own. In 1955, recognizing that many of their problems shared similarities, the Afro-Asian Group was formed, and it was there at the formation of the Afro-Asian group that many scholars believe the first significant South-South Cooperation started. The Latin American countries finally join the African and Asian member states in 1964 at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (TCDC) creating the G77. In 1972 the UN recognized that the cooperation of developing countries should be a priority, and therefore in 1974 the GA created a special unit focusing on TCDC within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A

¹⁵ "North-South Divide." Wikipedia. July 13, 2015. Accessed July 19, 2015. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North-South_divide.

major step in the history of South-South Cooperation was the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which will be discussed in a later section. In 2004 the Special Unit for TCDC was renamed the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, which it still holds today. The 2005 G-8 Meeting in Scotland addressed the issues that the MDG's cannot be met without increased South-South interactions and assistance. This G-8 meeting will also be discussed in a further section. More recently in the history of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation is the 2009 High Level Committee meeting in Nairobi, Kenya where the Nairobi outcome document highlighted the roles that the national governments, regional entities, and UN agencies are to play in supporting and implementing South-South and triangular cooperation.¹⁶

Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA)

The Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA) played a major part in the history of South-South Cooperation. In 1978, 138 countries met in Buenos Aires, Argentina to discuss technical cooperation. At BAPA there were 15 focal areas for technical cooperation that were laid out for promoting and implementing technical cooperation. Most of the 15 focal areas come in the forms of recommendations that range from recommendations of actions that should be taken at the national level to the formulation, orientation, and sharing of policy experiences with respect to science and technology. In the introduction passage, section four of the BAPA makes an extremely good point that "while the progress of the developing countries depends primarily on their own efforts, that progress is also affected by the policies and performance of the developed countries. At the same time, it is evident that as a consequence of widening international relations,

¹⁶"United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Background." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Background. Accessed July 18, 2015.
<http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/about/Background.html>.

co-operations and interdependence in many fields, the progress of the developed countries is now, and will increasingly be, affected by the policies and performance of the developing countries.”¹⁷ The Buenos Aires Plan of Action was an integral player in the process of pushing South-South Cooperation forward into what it is today, because before the BAPA there was never a set of widely accepted recommendations or regulations that covered wide range of focal points that both developed and developing member states could follow to advance South-South Cooperation.

The 31st G8 Summit

The 31st G8 Summit held in Scotland was another pivotal moment in South-South Cooperation history. The 31st G8 Summit addressed the issue that the MDGs cannot be met without increased South-South interactions and assistance. This was very clear when looking back at the MDG section of the Summit’s notes. The goals set forth by the Summit included: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development.¹⁸ It is evident that these goals are aimed at aiding and improving the nations of the Global South. In this global partnership, with accordance to the United Nation Millennium Declaration, developing sovereign states are to work together to grow and uphold healthy nations that ensure development while developed nations agree to support the developing countries through aid, trade, and debt relief in return that those nations work towards

¹⁷ "The Buenos Aires Plan of Action." United Nations Development Programme. Accessed July 18, 2015. [http://ssc.undp.org/content/dam/ssc/documents/Key Policy Documents/BAPA.pdf](http://ssc.undp.org/content/dam/ssc/documents/Key%20Policy%20Documents/BAPA.pdf).

¹⁸ "2005 G8 Gleneagles Documents: MDG's DOC." 2005 G8 Gleneagles Documents: MDGs DOC. Accessed July 18, 2015. <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/2005gleneagles/>

keeping a firm economy and government that address the needs of its people to work towards becoming developed.

Triangular Cooperation

Generally defined, triangular cooperation is the exchange of knowledge and resources between developing nations where there is a third party partnership that is usually a developed national government or organization.¹⁹ Triangular cooperation is supported by a base of bilaterally supportive developing countries working together to trade goods, resources, knowledge, technology, etc. to work toward becoming developed. However, those states are not working alone. Those developing nations are also working alongside developed member states or multilateral organizations, in which those organizations or developed countries promote, initiate, and facilitate South-South initiatives.²⁰ If developing countries were to try and work completely on their own, they would run into problems such as not having enough funding, training, management, technology, or support. However, there are challenges that triangular cooperation faces. Those challenges include: harmonization, country involvement, and scope of projects. With multiple stakeholders in the partnership its can be challenging to keep every player on the same page as to what is going on. Second, the beneficiary member states could show a lack of involvement on the part of planning and executing the work other than writing checks. Third, multiple projects may be duplicated by other partnerships that

¹⁹ "Briefing Note: What Are South-South and Triangular Cooperation?" International Trade Union Confederation. Accessed September 12, 2015. <http://www.ituc-csi.org/briefing-note-what-are-south-south>.

²⁰ "What Is Triangular Cooperation." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - What Is Triangular Cooperation. Accessed July 19, 2015. http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/Global_Portal_for_Triangular_Cooperation/What_is_Triangular_Cooperation.html

results in disconnects and duplicated efforts.²¹ Those are just a few of the challenges that one needs to be aware of when studying South-South Cooperation and triangular cooperation.

South-South Cooperation Successes

South-South Cooperation has had many major successes. To start, Japan has been a major contributor and partner in South-South Cooperation, and in the years from 1996 to 2011, Japan donated 33 million dollars to promote South-South cooperation enterprises. But that is not all that Japan has done, Japan also created triangular training programmes, bilateral partnership programmes, and cultivated over 700,000 hectares of New Rice for Africa (NERICA) varieties of cultivated rice in 31 countries in Africa that lead to poverty reduction in Uganda (5%) and Benin (13%). Japan has stated that it's goal is to learn from their modalities, share their potential modalities with other potential partners to create a mutual learning process, and to learn from all experiences to better triangular cooperation as a whole. Another success has been the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Fund which has helped to combat HIV/AIDS by building stations around Burundi that are equipped to test and treat around 39,000 people each year. Those stations will be able to not only treat HIV and AIDS patients, but also treat patients with other sexually transmitted diseases, patients lacking in prenatal health, lacking in reproductive health, or patients that are in need of family planning help. The IBSA fund has also trained over 4,500 farmers to work with enhanced agriculture techniques in Guinea-Bissau and has worked to improve their education and clean energy usage by trying to implement solar energy. So far, crops have increased 12% and 3,000 people

²¹ Yamashiro Fordelone, Talita. "Triangular Co-operation and Aid Effectiveness: Can Triangular Co-operation Make Aid More Effective?" OECD, 2009. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/46387212.pdf>.

have access to electricity. China has invested in solar energy systems in Kenya that have benefitted over 250 people, 100 solar cooker systems, and 100 solar water-heating systems to be used by villages in sub-Saharan Africa.²² It is clear that South-South Cooperation has shown that it can be successful and should be encouraged by the international community. However, traditional North-South cooperation relationships should not be abandoned. Instead, a healthy balance of South-South and North-South relationships creates the ideal equilibrium to support nations of the Global South in the effort to increase their self-reliance and become a part of the Global North.

South-South Cooperation Challenges

Although South-South Cooperation has had quite a few successes, it has also had many challenges that it continues to overcome. Many of the obstacles include:

North-oriented mind set and traditional vertical links with metro poles; mutual suspicions and rivalries, including between bigger and smaller states; lack of experience of working together and low-level administrative barriers; ignoring larger, shared interests, and pressing of exclusively national goals; low-level of awareness and inadequate knowledge concerning common problems and interests; opposition to and undermining of South-South cooperation from foreign and often domestic quarters; lack of support from the multilateral institutions and international community; petty politics, and lack of institutional experience and culture of working together, in particular in global mechanisms and instruments for South-South cooperation.²³

To combat these challenges the first ever Arab South-South development expo was held in Doha, Qatar on February 18th, 2014 with the motto “Solution to Action”. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) discussed efficient water usage

²² DeI Gigante, Lawrence. "U.N. Showcases South-South Successes." U.N. Showcases South-South Successes. July 10, 2012. Accessed July 18, 2015.

²³ "South-South Cooperation: The Challenge of Implementation." South Centre. March 1, 2005. Accessed July 18, 2015. <http://www.g77.org/ifcc11/docs/doc-03-ifcc11.pdf>.

in dry lands for agriculture, how to increase the production of agricultural productivity, and how to support farmers' organizations. The Deputy Regional Director of the UNDP made a very good point at the expo by saying, "No one nation and no one community has all the answers. That is why this Expo is important, as a showcase for joint creativity in our region."²⁴ It would be beneficial in your resolution for your country to address ways that it sees fit to overcome the challenges that South-South Cooperation faces.

Existing South-South Cooperation Partnerships

The United Nations Special Unit for South-South Cooperation so far has four existing partnerships. Those partnerships include: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA); Korean Facility for Poverty Reduction through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Education, Science and Technology; and Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) for South-South Cooperation. JICA has four mission statements, which are: addressing the Millennium Development Goals as a whole, reducing poverty through equitable growth, improving governance, and achieving human security.²⁵ In 2014, JICA sent out over 136,500 experts to developing countries, accepted 538,000 participants for training courses in Japan, dispatched 46,000 volunteers to a total of 96 countries, given out 40.4 million doses of different vaccines to reduce child mortality rates, set up 11,500 new schools with a total of 83,000 new

²⁴ "The Search for Solutions to Arab Development Challenges Heads South." United Nations Development Programme. February 18, 2014. Accessed July 18, 2015.
<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2014/02/18/the-search-for-solutions-to-arab-development-challenges-heads-south.html>.

²⁵ "Mission Statement." JICA. Accessed July 19, 2015.
<http://www.jica.go.jp/english/about/mission/index.html>.

classrooms, and irrigated 2.15 million hectares of land, just to name a few.²⁶ IBSA is obviously a partnership between the three countries the acronym is named after. However, it is not exclusive to only those three states. IBSA also is partnered with 13 other member nations, mostly developing. The main objectives of the IBSA are to reduce poverty and hunger in the Global South, to be a leader in South-South Cooperation, to develop the best practices and that can be replicated to fight against poverty and hunger, and lastly to build new partnership for development.²⁷ IBSA's 2014 successes included: 39,000 reproductive health consultations, six doctors and eleven trained paramedics, solar energy given to 25 different villages, 1,000 adults attained functional reading abilities, 1,200 youth engaged in sports and team activities, 12,000 individuals given access to safe drinking water, and 7,700 farmers' agricultural yield was improved due to improved irrigation systems.²⁸ Korean Facility for Poverty Reduction through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Education, Science and Technology has a project funding of \$4.5 million and has triangular partners in Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and Africa.²⁹ One of the many projects of the Korean Facility is the Canaan Farmer School, which has so far trained over 540 farmers in organic farming. These schools have been opened in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Palestine, the Philippines, and Uganda.

²⁶ "JICA At A Glance." JICA. Accessed July 18, 2015.

http://www.jica.go.jp/english/publications/reports/annual/2014/c8h0vm000090s8nn-att/2014_glance.pdf

²⁷ "About IBSA Trust Fund." IBSA Fund. Accessed July 18, 2015.

<http://tcdc2.undp.org/IBSA/about/about.htm>.

²⁸ "Home." IBSA. Accessed July 19, 2015. <http://tcdc2.undp.org/IBSA/Default.aspx>.

²⁹ "United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - About." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - About. Accessed July 18, 2015.

<http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/partner/ExistingPartnerships/KFP/About.html>.

In Korea alone 700,000 farmers people have been trained.³⁰ The Korean Facility also started the Asian Regional Initiative for Climate Change Education (RICE) project that educates small-scale communities on climate change in workshop-based education in developing nation-states throughout Asia.³¹ There is also the Learning-By-Development experience, which is aimed to educating the least developed countries on science and technology innovation and policies.³² The PGTF is the liquidation of the UN Emergency Operation Trust Fund and the distribution of the remaining balance in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 38/201. The purpose of the PGTF is to help in financing investment/studies/reports prepared by professional consultation agencies in developing member states that are members of the G77 and to facilitate the implementation of the projects within the framework of the Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC).³³ It would be constructive to your research to further study the Caracas Programme of Action on ECDC.

Conclusion

South-South Cooperation is a great way for developing nations to work together to share technology, information, services, goods, etc. Historically, this was not always

³⁰ "United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Cnaan Farmer School." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Cnaan Farmer School. Accessed July 18, 2015.

<http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/partner/ExistingPartnerships/KFP/Projects/CnaanFarmerSchool.html>.

³¹ "United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Asian RICE." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Asian RICE. Accessed July 18, 2015.

<http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/partner/ExistingPartnerships/KFP/Projects/asianRice.html>

³² "United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Learning-Dy-Development." United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation - Learning-Dy-Development. Accessed July 18, 2015.

<http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc/partner/ExistingPartnerships/KFP/Projects/Learning-Dy-Development.html>.

³³ "About IBSA Trust Fund." IBSA Fund. Accessed July 18, 2015.

<http://tcdc2.undp.org/IBSA/about/about.htm>.

thought to be the best way to help developing states. Before, wealthy countries would simply loan huge sums of money to poor nations knowing they couldn't pay it back but thinking at least they are getting the money. What the international community has realized is that those developing member states cannot focus on any other type of development because they are constantly fixated on the goal of paying back their debt. Therefore, something else needs to be done. For instance, a goal at the 31st G8 Summit in Scotland was to address debt relief in Africa to help in promoting development in other areas other than repaying debt to wealthy countries. Also, a strategy within South-South Cooperation is triangular cooperation in which there is an exchange of knowledge and resources between two or more developing nations while there is also a third party partnership that is usually a developed national government or organization that helps to guide the developing states. SSC has had many successes and the partnerships that have made those successes have worked very hard to achieve the various MDGs; focusing mainly on eradicating poverty and hunger, although the Korean Facility has focused on educating individuals on the climate change in developing member states. Those Partnerships include the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA); Korean Facility for Poverty Reduction through South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Education, Science and Technology; and Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) for South-South Cooperation. Each organization focuses in on certain areas of the MDG's but overall they work together to develop poverty stricken nations of the Global South. Even with the successes, SSC does have its challenges such as north-oriented mind-sets, petty politics, inadequate knowledge, and low-level awareness. With

South-South Cooperation supporting traditional North-South relationships there is no reason the challenges listed above can't be overcome like so many already have.

Questions

1. What are some ways/strategies to help in debt cancellation/relief in Africa?
2. What are healthy ways in which to help guide developing nations without breaching their sovereignty or creating a habit of reliance?
3. To what level should the U.N. become involved if it sees a developed nation blatantly taking advantage of a developing member state?
4. In what other ways could governments and NGOs partner together to assist developing nations?
5. Does South South Cooperation's successes outweigh its challenges based on your nations views?

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Second Committee: Fragile States: The Transition from Relief to Development

Introduction

In accordance with the United Nations (UN) charter, the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) of the General Assembly (GA) strives, “to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character.” Post conflict and large scale natural disaster, there is a need for effective and sustainable programs to ensure the growth and development of nation states in distress. Too often, a lack of funding and efficient social programming allows for citizens of fragile states to fall into the pit of forgotten disasters once emergency relief has been administered. Deciding the time of transition from aiding nations in need of relief to developing political, economic, environmental and social fortitude is one of the largest problems facing the United Nations. Determining the moment at which states should receive developmental aid instead of relief aid, or a way that relief aid can be purposed toward more sustainable developmental aid will also determine the way in which aid can be used to better service fragile states. While ensuring the sovereignty of a nation state, the UN must face the obstacle of determining what qualifies a nation to receive relief aid and which qualities (social, economic, political, military, etc.) determine a fragile state. Currently, there is no internationally recognized definition of a fragile state. By determining what qualifies a nation as a fragile state, the UN, NGOs, and state governments are better equipped to create policies to

assist fragile states that promotes sustainable development in these nations to prevent fragile states from falling back into the need for relief when they no longer receive relief aid. In addition to this, determining the way in which aid is delivered will decide the effective nature of the aid being dispersed. Economic growth and developmental aid must then be determined through macroeconomic policy, such as international trade and finance. Developmental financing should be determined through assessing trends present in the transition from relief to developmental trends for most effective aid.

The Concern for Nation States in Need of Relief

The UN is on the ground providing relief with countless disasters. Through the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), displaced persons are provided for with food, camps, and other facilities they may not receive otherwise.³⁴ In addition to natural disasters, man made disaster from war and political strife displace individuals. Both types of emergency leave individuals without security and basic rights. The Secretary General and representatives of the Secretary General negotiate “zones of peace” in which humanitarian workers protect and deliver relief aid. While all of this relief is with good intention, it is not always done well. Many nation states find themselves in situations in which they have a lot of money initially, that is used for short term success, and forget long term investment into development. We can see this in Haiti. After the earthquake in 2010, 9.3 billion dollars was pledged to Haiti relief efforts. Realistically, only 2.5 billion

³⁴ United Nations. “Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance.” <http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/humanitarian/>. Accessed July 10, 2015.

made it to Haiti, most of which was spent on bandages and short term relief.³⁵ Temporary transitional tents become permanent homes. Haiti is not alone in this post-disaster struggle. Because of a lack of coordination, transparency, efficiency, and pledging fulfillment, many nations find it hard to rebuild and develop. In many cases, they do not even decide the way in which the money is spent to best suit their needs.³⁶

Those least equipped to deal with natural disaster are left to deal with aid being dispersed to ad hoc temporary solutions and help that fades when short term goals are met or monetary aid ends. Humanitarian relief aid is important in the initial aftermath of disaster, but a timeline must be made to determine predictable planning and clear coordination of aid and assistance and when short term relief becomes long term development.³⁷ The aftermath of nations who have only been given short term relief is, in short, destruction, leaving nation states vulnerable to challenges ahead.

The UN Addresses Transition to Development

For operational measures, the United Nations for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) defines transition as, “ the phase of a humanitarian crisis (conflict or natural disaster) in which acute vulnerability begins to decline, leading to a reduction in international life-saving assistance and an increase in early recovery,

³⁵ Beaubien, Jason. “What Happened to the Aid Meant to Rebuild Haiti?” <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2013/02/28/172875646/what-happened-to-the-aid-meant-to-rebuild-haiti>. Accessed July 9, 2015.

³⁶ Boumba, Nixon. “How Not to Rebuild Nepal.” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/04/30/how-not-to-rebuild-nepal/>. Accessed July 10, 2015.

³⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “Thematic Areas: Transition from Relief to Development.” <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/policy/thematic-areas/transition-from-relief-to-development>. Accessed July 8, 2015.

recovery and rehabilitation activities.”³⁸ When an afflicted area transitions to development, it is usually due to an improvement in initial conditions. During the transition stage, funding must be redirected to sustainable growth. As well, strategic peacebuilding interventions and conflict analysis help to inform the response that must be given to transitioning states.³⁹ The main goal of the UN and its operatives is to initiate immediate action, crisis resolution, early recovery, and move from a short and/or medium-term recovery strategy to a long-term national development program.⁴⁰ One of these operatives is OCHA. In aiding transition, OCHA tries to fulfill six objectives: “continue to reduce remaining acute vulnerability through well-coordinated assistance efforts, assist development actors to launch and/or scale up recovery assistance, work with national authorities and development actors in the affected country to integrate humanitarian needs into social services networks and development frameworks, assist members of the in-country coordination system to prepare for resurgent or new crises, handover/transfer appropriate services and coordination activities to national authorities and development actors, and phase out services no longer required, and encourage strategic and operational coherence between humanitarian, recovery, reconstruction and development assistance.”⁴¹ Even with these measures in place, development is not possible without proper transition management and successful transition planning before the transition phase starts. Also, the transition planning should support national long-term

³⁸ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “OCHA on Message: Transition.” https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM_Transition_English.pdf Accessed July 8, 2015.

³⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “Thematic Areas: Transition from Relief to Development.” <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/policy/thematic-areas/transition-from-relief-to-development>. Accessed July 8, 2015.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “OCHA on Message: Transition.” https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM_Transition_English.pdf Accessed July 8, 2015.

interest. Conflict analysis should be the fundamental informative for financing tools such as the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), and the Central Emergency Fund (CERF).⁴²

OCHA is in charge of two types of pooled funds. The first, CERF, is, “one of the fastest and most effective ways to support rapid humanitarian response for people affected by natural disasters and armed conflict.” CERF receives donations throughout the year and targets \$450 million as their annual budget. They accept this money from mostly nation states, but also individuals, businesses, and charitable organizations. Humanitarian organizations must apply for money and meet the criteria of being in a situation that is both urgent and the relief must save lives. CERF reacts to applications in as little as 48 hours, and a loan facility of \$30 million for at most a year loan, providing there is a donor lined up to pay back the loan. “In an average year, CERF allocates approximately \$450 million to humanitarian operations in some 50 different countries.” Although CERF is fast acting, it is not a stable way to fund developmental relief.

The second type of pooled fund is Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs). CBPFs, “allocate funding based on identified humanitarian needs and priorities at the country level in line with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC).” In 2015, 17 countries use CBPFs. Much like CERF, funds are used on a national level to ensure fast relief when humanitarian needs amplify or emerge. The focus is on fast relief to save as many lives as possible.

In contrast, the PBF supports, “activities, actions, programmes and organisations that seek to build a lasting peace in countries emerging from conflict.” The focus is on

⁴² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “OCHA on Message: Transition.” https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM_Transition_English.pdf Accessed July 8, 2015.

sustainable peace efforts, thus creating environments in which individuals may not have to fear the repercussions of future armed conflict if the initiatives prove successful. PBF supports the following specific types of activities:

“(a) Activities designed to respond to imminent threats to the peace process, support for the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue, in particular in relation to strengthening of national institutions and processes set up under those agreements;

(b) Activities undertaken to build and/or strengthen national capacities to promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict and to carry out peacebuilding activities;

(c) Activities undertaken in support of efforts to revitalize the economy and generate immediate peace dividends for the population at large;

(d) Establishment or re-establishment of essential administrative services and related human and technical capacities which may include, in exceptional circumstances and over a limited period of time, the payment of civil service salaries and other recurrent costs.”

In addition to OCHA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works toward providing communities affected by natural disasters and human conflicts with Livelihoods and economic recovery programs.⁴³ By spotlighting jobs, sustainable livelihoods, and economic recovery, UNDP strives to quickly bring communities back toward development. As well, Rio+20 reassured the commitment of nations to assess challenges, such as sustainable development for all to achieve economic growth and stability. Although all nations are responsible for creating intrastate solutions to these

⁴³ United Nations Development Programme. “Economic Recovery.” <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/sustainable-development/livelihoods-and-economic-recovery/>

challenges, fragile and lesser developed states have a need for additional resources and solutions to these problems to ensure sustainable development for all.⁴⁴

Conclusion

For people suffering through the aftermath of natural disaster and conflict in their nation, life is not only an uncomfortable uproot for a short period, but can lead to the ultimate destruction of their livelihoods and stunt any chance their nation had for growth. Without necessary strategic funding, natural disaster and conflict leads to either ultimate collapse of a nation state or it's economy, thus leading to relief aid after relief aid given to fruitless ventures.

⁴⁴ United Nations Development Programme. "Open Working Group Proposal for Sustainable Development Goals."

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal.html> Accessed July 9, 2015.

Questions

1. What sustainable measures has your state taken to rebuild after natural disasters/war?
2. What sustainable measures has your state taken to aid others?
3. Is your nation afflicted with stunted growth due to natural disasters or war?
4. How does your state define a fragile state?
5. In association with the United Nations, what has your nation's government done to facilitate cooperative measures on an international level?

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Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Introduction

Through its existence, the United Nations, along with its Member States, has initiated and organized many major conferences or summits focusing on a wide variety of topics and issues. For example, there have been four world conferences on the status of women (1975 in Mexico City, 1980 in Copenhagen, 1985 in Nairobi, and 1995 in Beijing), conferences regarding environment and sustainable development (1972 in Stockholm, 1992 and 2012 in Rio) and a recent conference on financing for development (July 2015 in Addis Ababa). Other conferences include the Millennium Summit in 2000 that led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the General Assembly's Special Session in New York (25-27 September 2015) that adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But before the Millennium Summit and Special Session, there was the World Summit for Social Development, which took place in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1995.

The final Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development addressed concerns that are included in the MDGs and SDGs – more specifically, concerns about poverty, full employment and social integration. For example, the first goal of both the MDGs and the SDGS has called for “eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.”¹ Achieving many of the goals established in both outcome documents would contribute to social integration by enhancing

¹ “World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen, 1995.” UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.un.org/>.

access to education, increasing access to healthcare and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. Therefore the goals of the World Summit for Social Development have remained a significant priority on the international agenda.

At the time of the summit, it was the largest gathering of world leaders ever, as they had all united with the purpose of promoting social development. Aside from the representation of states and regions, bodies of the United Nations system were represented as well bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and specialized agencies, including the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization. The summit focused on “poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration.”² At the end of the summit, the Copenhagen Declaration was adopted which noted that despite the fact that there was some progress being made in regards to social and economic development, there were still a large variety of social, economic and political issues resulting in social disintegration, widespread poverty and a significantly large number of unemployed persons.³ Part B of the declaration outlined many principles and goals that were derived from the summit. The main ones included promoting universal respect for all persons regardless of differences and promoting equality and democracy.⁴ Finally, the declaration outlined a set of 10 commitments, including the following:

1. Create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development;
2. Eradicate absolute poverty by a target date to be set by each country;
3. Support full employment as a basic policy goal;

² "World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen, 1995." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://www.un.org/>.

³ "Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development." April 1, 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015.

⁴ "World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development - Part B." UN DESA. 1995. Accessed July 5, 2015.

4. Promote social integration based on the enhancement and protection of all human rights;
5. Achieve equality and equity between women and men;
6. Attain universal and equitable access to education and primary healthcare;
7. Accelerate the development of Africa and the least developed countries;
8. Ensure that structural adjustment programmes include social development goals;
9. Increase resources allocated to social development;
10. Strengthen cooperation for social development through the UN.⁵

The Copenhagen Declaration was considered “the broadest set of norms and explicit commitments to guide action on social development at the national, regional and international levels.”⁶ It was obvious that these objectives would require an extensive method of implementation and tracking of its progress. Consequently, the Committee for Social Development was established as the official tracking body for the implementation of the Declaration. Since being established by ECOSOC in 1995, the Commission has expanded its membership and held yearly sessions to follow up on the summit and measure overall progress. The Commission releases yearly reports that have helped establish a common understanding of what has occurred and the progress that has been achieved thus far as well what needs to change in order to achieve prime results.

Implementation

Chapter 5 of the Declaration discusses the “Implementation and Follow-Up” and begins by stating that the requirements of implementation involve “the promotion and protection of all human rights,” “recognition of diversity,” “partnership of States, local authorities, non-governmental organizations,” and “the empowerment of people who are to be assisted.”⁷ The

5 "World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development - Part C." UN DESA. 1995. Accessed July 5, 2015.

6 "Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World." 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/651/46/PDF/N1465146.pdf?OpenElement>.

7 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

Summit determined that in order to implement and establish these changes, a complete knowledge of the social, economic and political situations of the people and countries in question is required before taking action. This would be done through in depth analysis of policies and “their impact on poverty, employment and social integration and development.”⁸ In addition, government policies should better address these issues while specifically outlining what needs to be done and having governments, local authorities and NGOs promote them to the best of their ability.

The second step to implementation of the outcomes was the involvement of civil society. This included “encouraging and supporting the creation and development of such organizations, particularly among the disadvantaged people”⁹ to ensure their full participation in society with access to resources while providing those resources and encouraging “educational institutions, the media and other sources of public information... to give special prominence to the challenges of social development.”¹⁰

The third step was to mobilize financial resources by giving priority to social development programs and establishing new methods of funding to ensure that the most necessary social needs are focused on to the fullest extent. Governments should also gain a full understanding of the financial implications of policies on poverty, unemployment and social integration.

8 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

9 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

10 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

The final step in the implementation of the outcomes is to ensure the cooperation of governments with international financial institutions and international organizations by strongly encouraging them to pursue projects that do not have any negative impact on social programs that affect the disadvantaged. The Declaration states that “The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund... and all other social organizations should further integrate social development goals into their policies, programs and operations”¹¹ with the purpose of promoting the eradication of poverty and ensuring that these influential institutions are able to positively impact those who are attempting to live above the poverty line.

The Copenhagen Declaration requires the United Nations to monitor whether social and economic programs are having any success. It also notes that ECOSOC, along with the General Assembly, “could convene meetings of high-level representatives to promote international dialogue on critical social issues.”¹² Aside from having the UN contribute resources, the Declaration insists that in order for the UN to play an effective role in the implementation of the outcomes, renewal and reformation of the system is essential. Organizations outside of the United Nations (such as the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and the International Labor Organization) are also encouraged to play a stronger role in the implementation process.

Follow-Up – 5 and 10 years

The Copenhagen Declaration specified that “The General Assembly should hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the

11 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

12 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

outcome of the Summit.”¹³ In 2000, world leaders and representatives convened once more for a special 24th session of the United Nations General Assembly. They came to the consensus that despite a major focus being placed on problems regarding social development, those problems were still as detrimental to society as ever before. They found that the “gap between rich and poor, between and within countries, has grown.”¹⁴ But their review of the past five years also showed that the United Nations was contributing more to implementation of the outcomes, as suggested in the Copenhagen Declaration. Also, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank had “now taken major steps to focus on social issues”¹⁵ with the World Bank deciding that poverty reduction would become one of its primary efforts. The special session of the General Assembly also discovered that the goal of full employment had suffered despite some minor achievements in some countries that had adopted new policies to combat the issue. Many poorer countries had wanted to attract foreign investments to boost their economies; however, this remained an impossibility due to foreign investors placing their resources elsewhere.

In a related area, several states had made significant efforts to ratify human rights documents; but this process had been slow. Countries had also taken steps to become more democratic, but many obstacles remained.

Overall, the five-year follow-up demonstrated that efforts to implement the outcomes of the Declaration had mixed results. Intergovernmental organizations were playing greater attention to social issues and some countries had improved their handling of financial resources, employment opportunities and democratic practices; however, income gaps had grown, foreign

13 "World Summit for Social Development Programme of Action - Chapter 5." UN News Center. 1995. Accessed July 7, 2015. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/text-version/agreements/poach5.htm>.

14 "Social Summit 5: Advancing the Social Development Agenda." Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Social Policy and Development Division Home. Accessed July 1, 2015.

15 "Social Summit 5: Advancing the Social Development Agenda." Department of Economic and Social Affairs - Social Policy and Development Division Home. Accessed July 1, 2015.

investment was not as extensive as some countries had hoped for, and there was little progress in areas of human rights or democratic governance in many countries.

Another follow up report, published in 2005, by the United Nations demonstrated almost the exact same results. The report mentioned that the new approach to implementing the outcomes should involve not only identifying the problems, but asking “if the causes were indeed being appropriately addressed.”¹⁶

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), which published the report, noted that governments were contributing to the effort by redistributing assets and implementing land reform. With regard to employment, the report recommended helping to develop “skills potential of workers so that they could be qualified for jobs in new and emerging sectors”¹⁷ while also encouraging improved public administration and greater participation of civil society to promote social integration.

Summit Outcomes Today – 2015

In November of 2014, the Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council released a report from the Commission’s fifty third session which was a follow-up to the World Summit. This report concluded that “globalization, urbanization and technological progress have contributed to economic growth, job creation and innovation.”¹⁸ In regard to social integration, the Secretary-General noted that thanks to the spread and incorporation of democracy, people were becoming more involved and aware, therefore

¹⁶ “The Social Summit 10 Years Later.” Accessed June 28, 2015.
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/SocialSummit-10YearsLater.pdf>.

¹⁷ “The Social Summit 10 Years Later.” Accessed June 28, 2015.
<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/SocialSummit-10YearsLater.pdf>.

¹⁸ “Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World.” 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/651/46/PDF/N1465146.pdf?OpenElement>.

increasing their capacity to make well-informed decisions. This may be the case in some governments, but in February of 2015 a report released by the United Nations stated that “the goals of the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen... remain unfilled.”¹⁹ Some existing democracies have continued to struggle with participation and overall freedoms even to this day. In addition to struggles with democracy, there is still uneven progress in social development with a wide range of inequalities that prevent the eradication of poverty and advancement of the social development goals. “Disparities in health, education... reflect unequal access to basic social services” and have resulted in the inability to break the poverty cycle.²⁰

On the positive side, the report observed that over the past twenty years many countries have gained a greater understanding of how to analyze and measure poverty. Overall governments have attempted to reduce unemployment by implementing reforms and policies to provide people with the jobs and training necessary to earn a living and to support those around them. But the goal of full employment twenty years from the summit remains elusive. “The number of jobless persons grew from 157 million in 1995 to some 186 million in 2005”²¹ and the wage gap has increased significantly. In addition, many of those who have seen a rise in their incomes above the poverty line are in danger of falling back into poverty.

Finally, in regards to the final outcome of total social integration, it has been observed that in 2015 many states have had great difficulty in establishing a norm of respect and tolerance for diversity, especially in the face of increased numbers of migrants and refugees, concerns

19 "Decrying Unfulfilled Goals of 1995 World Summit, Delegates in Commission for Social Development Call for New, Transformative Public Policies | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." UN News Center. Accessed July 3, 2015. <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/soc4829.doc.htm>.

20 "Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World." 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/651/46/PDF/N1465146.pdf?OpenElement>.

21 "Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World." 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/651/46/PDF/N1465146.pdf?OpenElement>.

about nationality, threats of terrorism and xenophobia. Both young people and the elderly, those of different races and ethnicity, those with disabilities, and women in general continue to face discrimination and barriers that prevent them from being fully functioning members of society. These difficulties result in lower employment rates, lower education rates, and a higher occurrence of poverty. On a positive note, the outcome of social integration has been advanced by “increased access to information and communications technology,”²² which has allowed for greater participation and more access to education, job opportunities, health care and more. This allows for individuals to realize their full potential, join with others who share common ideas and create a better society to live in.

Conclusion

Since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, the various follow-ups in 2000, 2005 and 2015 have demonstrated that despite minor progress being made in relation to the outcomes, there are still barriers that prevent full implementation of the goals of the Declaration, and that progress in implementation has been uneven. Therefore, implementation of the outcomes has not been as successful as the world leaders had initially hoped. As noted by the Secretary General, “all in all, progress in social development is fragile.”²³ Through the various follow-ups, it has been noted multiple times that in order for successful implementation of the outcomes to occur, universal social policies are essential along with the cooperation of governments and their citizens as well as their ability to realize that things need to change.

22 "Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World." 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/651/46/PDF/N1465146.pdf?OpenElement>.

23 "Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World." 2014. Accessed July 2, 2015. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N14/651/46/PDF/N1465146.pdf?OpenElement>.

Despite the difficulties of implementing the outcomes of the 1995 World Summit on Social Development, there is reason for optimism. Both the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals incorporate some of the major concerns addressed by the World Summit Declaration as noted earlier. If States live up to the commitments they've made in connection to the SDGs, they will be contributing to the achievement of the goals of the Declaration. The outcomes and goals of the Summit should remain a priority in the minds of governments, global leaders and citizens of the world until they are fully realized.

Questions to Consider

1. What specific programs/policies has your country implemented to aid in the eradication of poverty, promote full employment, and advance social integration?
2. What does your country believe UN agencies and NGOs can do to further the Summit's agenda?
3. For developed/donor countries, what has your country done to implement the outcomes and/or aid developing countries?
4. For developing countries, what can be done better to assist your country in reaching the Summit outcomes?
5. What programs/policies should the UN specifically implement to aid these outcomes?
6. Has your country seen any specific change in poverty levels and employment rates?
7. How will the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals affect efforts to promote the goals of the World Summit for Social Development?
8. Are there elements of the World Summit Declaration that have been overlooked in the Sustainable Development Goals that still need to be given attention by the international community? If so, which ones?

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Promoting Gender Equality, Social Equity, and Women's Empowerment

Promoting gender equality, social equity, and women's empowerment has been of concern to the United Nations for several decades. This is evidenced by the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (hereafter CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol, which was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979, and by the First World Conference on Women, which took place in Mexico City in 1975.^{24, 25} Throughout the United Nations system—Secretaries-General, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, Member States, academics, and civil society—there is widespread agreement on the idea that promoting gender equality, women's empowerment, and social equity will benefit everyone. This would include women and girls, men and boys, marginalized groups, society in general, and the way in which the economy functions.²⁶ But while there is agreement on the importance of these concepts and a number of initiatives have been developed to promote them, there are also numerous challenges to implementing them.

The United Nations, and particularly the recently established United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (hereafter UN Women), views gender equality as "... not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful,

²⁴ "CEDAW, 29th Session 30 June to 25 July 2003," accessed May 31, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>.

²⁵ "World Conference of the International Women's Year," accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/mexico.html>.

²⁶ "Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016 Summary Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights," accessed May 25, 2015.

prosperous and sustainable world."²⁷ Perhaps the best way to understand gender equality is to view it through the lenses of substantive and legal equality. Legal equality has to do with the equalities women are granted through laws enacted in their countries—marriage laws, laws about reproductive rights, laws about who is allowed to own property and under what conditions, laws about nationality and who can have it and how, laws about domestic violence, laws regarding salaries and so on and so forth. These ensure a legal equality—that is, if someone goes against these laws and there is evidence and the judicial system is not corrupt, then a woman may be able to receive some kind of restitution. But this kind of equality only goes so far; it does not impact cultural values, and in some cases, it may not be able to, and that is where the idea of substantive equality comes in.²⁸

Substantive equality, as suggested by a recent UN Women's report, is concerned with changing the way societies and cultures are structured, in evening out household responsibilities and how much unpaid work women do, in ensuring that women are able to have access to things like a pension in their old-age, and in restructuring the economy so that gender-centered policies are at its center and not just a nice byproduct.²⁹ While it involves a certain legal equality, because of efforts on behalf of several different United Nations bodies, programmes, and agencies to engage men and boys, it also encompasses restructuring the way gender equality is achieved by having men and boys be involved in the process. Achieving substantive equality, and in so doing promoting gender equality, would also support women's empowerment.

Women's empowerment is the process by which women are given the tools they need to access power. Power can include control over their own fertility, an education, control over their

²⁷ "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment," accessed May 25, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>.

²⁸ "Progress of the World's," accessed July 2, 2015,

²⁹ "Ibid"

own finances, and perhaps more generally, and yet paradoxically more specifically, the ability to have a say in what is happening around them and to them on all levels. In the words of the United Nations Population Fund, women's empowerment is made up of five parts:

women's sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.³⁰

Women's empowerment, then, concerns itself with women's access—or lack thereof—to resources, with ensuring that their access is equal to the access men have; with ensuring that women have the tools necessary to access power and resources, can speak at any level and, eventually, have as much influence as men.

Social equity is a term that is not often found in United Nations documents because of its contentious nature for some Member States.³¹ According to one definition it refers to “a set of standards which apply to personal and social relationships” or a “bundle of rights and duties which apply to members of certain ‘protected classes’ in society.”³² Such protected classes could include the elderly, the disabled, ethnic or religious minorities, migrants, refugees, or gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender persons. Thus social equity refers to a different segment of the population than gender equality or women's empowerment, but, in cases where women are discriminated against or when they belong to one of the protected classes, policies that promote social equity would most likely benefit them as well. Policies that promote social equity would include programs to provide the protected classes or marginalized groups with access to education, health, equal protection of the law, job training or other benefits that would help them

³⁰ “Guidelines on Women's Empowerment,” accessed May 26, 2015, <http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html>.

³¹ Interview with Consultant to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

³² Shippensburg University statement, accessed August 13, 2015 at www.ship.edu/Social_Equity/What_is_Social_Equity/

enjoy a higher standard of living or one at least on a par with other citizens of their country. Furthermore, when considering what social equity means, how it should be applied, and whether any of its policies are effective, it is important to remember that while all of the groups mentioned experience hardship of one form or another, these hardships differ greatly across the world. This is also true for women's empowerment and gender equality. Moreover, there are several countries that have reservations about the CEDAW, as well as the other conventions concerning social equity, and those reservations cannot be ignored.³³

Historically, the United Nations has been concerned with gender equality, women's empowerment, and social equity for several decades, as can be seen through the holding of conferences, the adoption of numerous conventions and declarations, and the establishment of bodies dedicated to the protection of vulnerable groups. There have been four world conferences on women, (1975 in Mexico City; 1980 in Copenhagen; 1985 in Nairobi; and 1995 in Beijing).^{34, 35} The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established in 1947.³⁶ The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its corresponding Committee were adopted in 1979.³⁷ And most recently (in 2012) the United Nations established UN Women to help coordinate the various bodies and activities dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.³⁸ Conventions or organizations to address the concerns of refugees (The United Nations Relief Works Agency – UNRWA, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees – UNHCR) were established in

³³ “Progress of the World's,” accessed May 25, 2015.

³⁴ “World Conference of the International Women's Year,” accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/mexico.html>.

³⁵ “Fourth world conference on Women,” accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/fwcwn.html>.

³⁶ “A Brief History on the CSW,” accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/brief-history>.

³⁷ CEDAW

³⁸ UN Women

1948 and 1951 respectively. And Conventions relating to refugees, migrants, and the disabled have been adopted throughout the history of the United Nations.³⁹

With regards to gender equality and women's empowerment, the concerns of today—ending violence against women committed during armed conflict; promoting education for women and girls; and ensuring that women are involved at all levels of society—were similar to those being discussed at the First World Conference on Women in 1975. This can be seen by examining the table of contents of the report of the conference, which lists such topics as "prevention of the exploitation of women and girls," "the situation of women in the employ of the United Nations and specialized agencies," "education and training," and "access of women to financial assistance" to name just a few.⁴⁰ Of particular interest to the First World Conference on Women were the ways in which women could participate in development processes, since there are many sections devoted to the various aspects of this idea.⁴¹

The Second World Conference on Women took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, from July 14-30, 1980.⁴² The topics addressed during this Conference varied somewhat from those addressed at the first one in Mexico City. There was more of an emphasis on families—topics included family planning, "battered women and violence in the family," and "international legislation to prevent the abandonment of families"; but it also discussed topics similar to those from the previous conference such as "women's participation in the strengthening of international peace and security and in the struggle against colonialism, racism, racial discrimination, foreign aggression and occupation and all forms of foreign domination," "the role of women in the

³⁹ "Interview"

⁴⁰ "Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year" (report, first world conference on women, Mexico City, Mexico, June 19 to July 2, 1975) accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/mexico.html>.

⁴¹ "Ibid."

⁴² "World Conference of the United Nations Decade for women: Equality, Development and Peace," accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/copenhagen.html>.

preparation of societies for life in peace," as well as migrant, refugee, and displaced women.⁴³

Another very important topic discussed at the Second World Conference on Women was the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.⁴⁴

The Third World Conference on Women, officially known as the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, took place in Nairobi from July 15-26, in 1985.⁴⁵ This conference adopted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, but as the title implies, it was mostly a conference meant to review previous actions and decide what to do next.⁴⁶

Ten years later, the Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, from September 4-15, 1995. Of particular importance is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted at this conference.⁴⁷ However, it is also important to note that member states attached several reservations and interpretative statements to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

The Declaration and Platform of Action consists of two parts: the declaration, which set out the intentions of the governments present at the conference, and the platform of action, which

⁴³ "Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace" (report, second world conference on women, Copenhagen, Denmark, July 14-30, 1980) accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/copenhagen.html>.

⁴⁴ "Ibid."

⁴⁵ "World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace," accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/nairobi.html>.

⁴⁶ "Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace" (report, third world conference on women, Nairobi, July 15-26, 1985) accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/nairobi.html>.

⁴⁷ "Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women" (report, fourth world conference on women, Beijing, China, September 4-15, 1995) accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/official.htm>.

was a plan meant to lead the way to further actions on behalf of other organizations.⁴⁸ This part is divided up into sections like "Mission Statement," "Global Framework," "Critical Areas of Concern," "Strategic Objectives and Actions," "Institutional Arrangements," and "Financial Arrangements." Under "Strategic Objectives and Actions" are found topics like "Women and Poverty," "Education and Training of Women," "Women in Power and Decision-making," and other similar topics.⁴⁹ The declaration portion of this document sets out ideas like "Women's rights are human rights," the importance of promoting shared responsibilities between men and women, giving women control over all aspects of their lives, most particularly their reproductive rights, and the need to ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights for all women and girls, regardless of race, age, language, culture, religion, ethnicity, or disability or because they are indigenous people.⁵⁰

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which also sets out important standards and concepts, was adopted by the General Assembly in 1979; its Optional Protocol was adopted in 1999.⁵¹ The Convention is the most comprehensive of the international conventions concerning women's rights. There are other conventions concerning marriage and other specialized concerns, but all of these concerns are covered in the CEDAW.⁵² It defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex ... in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."⁵³ It also defines what equality should look like in these fields and sets a general agenda for how

⁴⁸ "Ibid."

⁴⁹ "Ibid."

⁵⁰ "Ibid."

⁵¹ CEDAW 29th Session 30 June to 25 July 2003" accessed May 31, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>.

⁵³ "Ibid."

equality should be achieved.⁵⁴ It established the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which is in charge of monitoring the implementation of this convention.⁵⁵

In addition to these conventions and conferences, the UN has also established various special bodies charged with promoting women's issues. The earliest of these was the Commission on the Status of Women, which was instrumental in the drafting of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as several other conventions and declarations.⁵⁶ The most recent entity, UN Women, was established in 2010, and serves as the secretariat for the Commission on the Status of Women.⁵⁷

Several agencies such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and UN Women have provided guidelines or handbooks in order to improve laws and practices related to women's issues. For example, UN Women has made available a Handbook for Legislation on Violence Against Women, which can be found as a PDF online.⁵⁸ A recent UN Women report lists ten priorities that may be of particular help to countries and other interested parties: (1) create more and better jobs for women, (2) reduce occupational segregation and gender pay gaps, (3) strengthen women's income security throughout the life cycle, (4) recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work, (5) invest in gender responsive social services, (6) maximize resources for the achievement of substantive equality, (7) support women's organizations to claim rights and shape policy agendas at all levels, (8) create an enabling global environment for the realization of women's rights, (9) use human rights standards to shape policies and catalyze change, and (10) generate evidence to assess progress on women's economic and social rights.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ “Ibid.”

⁵⁵ “Ibid.”

⁵⁶ “A Brief History on the CSW,” accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/brief-history>.

⁵⁷ “Ibid.”

⁵⁸ “Handbook on Violence”

⁵⁹ “Progress of the World’s Women”

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) deals with female genital mutilation, child marriage, and gender-based violence.⁶⁰ The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is concerned with gender-based violence, child marriage, and women's and girls' access—or lack thereof—to education. It has prepared several papers and reports on these issues, as well as on gender stereotyping.⁶¹ These are only a few of the agencies whose work, while not specifically related to women's issues, still impacts them and this fact only serves to emphasize the fact that issues that affect women also effect society as a whole.

Many states have also been working to improve women's circumstances. Over a hundred member states are party to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.⁶² States like Brazil have worked to ensure that the pay gap based on gender is narrower.⁶³ Currently, the average gap between women's and men's wages is 24% globally.⁶⁴ While some pay gaps have narrowed, it is often because men's wages have fallen, not because women's wages have risen. The ideal here is for good, safe jobs where women who do the same jobs as men are paid the same; safe jobs for women are jobs where they are not sexually harassed and do not face more dangers than men do.⁶⁵ The same standard could be applied to other marginalized groups, such as the disabled, migrant workers and refugees, and so forth. But while it is important to note the economic side of gender equality, social equity and women's empowerment, it is also essential to take into account the reservations states have attached to CEDAW. There are 26 countries with reservations in regards to equal rights in marriage and the

⁶⁰ “Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment,” accessed May 30, 2015, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>.

⁶¹ “Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equality,” accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/WRGSIndex.aspx>.

⁶² “A Brief History on the CSW,” accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/brief-history>.

⁶³ “Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016 Summary Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights” accessed May 25, 2015

⁶⁴ “Ibid. Figure 3”

⁶⁵ “Ibid.”

family, 22 countries that have reservations on the basis of the compatibility with religious, customary, or traditional laws and practices, 17 countries with reservations about equality of nationality and the elimination of discrimination; and 6 countries with reservations about social protection and equality in employment.⁶⁶ These are fairly substantial numbers, and while it is true that those states that ratified the convention are legally bound to take actions to improve gender equality, these reservations need to be addressed carefully and with respect for different cultures and practices. And, of course, there are countries, such as the United States, that have not ratified the convention at all.

There are several conventions that address the issue of social equity. Among these are the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as others.⁶⁷ Some countries, particularly the Nordic countries, have tried to incorporate language referring to gay/lesbian rights, but, since it is still a rather contentious issue for many states, such attempts have not been successful.⁶⁸

In the coming years, the United Nations needs to continue promoting gender equality, social equity, and women's empowerment. It should attempt to come up with clearer, more accessible definitions of what is meant by phrases such as "gender equality" and "social equity." UN Women's HeForShe campaign is a way for men to become more engaged in the process of gender equality, and this campaign should be continued, although it is possible that more public

⁶⁶ "Ibid, figure 7."

⁶⁷ "Declarations and Conventions Contained in General Assembly Resolutions," accessed September 16, 2015, http://www.un.org/documents/instruments/docs_en.asp?type=conven

⁶⁸ "Interview"

awareness of its existence and what it means is necessary.⁶⁹ The General Secretary's UniTE to end violence campaign is also a good example of beneficial campaigns.⁷⁰ Member states should also become familiar with the various handbooks that specialized agencies have made available in order to improve laws and practices related to women's issues, and social equity. Progress needs to be achieved through cooperation, not only on an international level, but at the national, regional, and communal level as well.

Questions to Consider:

1. Has your country ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women? If so, does your country have any reservations on the convention? What are they? If not, what are your country's reasons for not doing so?
2. Has your country ratified the International Covenants on Human Rights? If not, what are your country's reasons for not doing so?
3. What can be done to create more and better jobs for women in your country?
4. Does your country have laws that deal with violence against women? Are your country's police and military trained in dealing with violence against women?
5. Does your country have laws to ensure equal pay, regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, disability or religion? Are there penalties in place for violating these laws? If not, what can your country do to make such laws a reality?
6. Do women have access to a non-contributory form of pension in your country? If not, what can be done to make this a reality?
7. What actions should the UN, Un agencies, NGO's, and the private sector take to

⁶⁹ "HeForShe," accessed May 30, 2015, <http://www.heforshe.org/>.

⁷⁰ "UniTE to end violence against women," accessed May30, 2015, <http://endviolence.un.org/>.

promote gender equality, social equity, and women's empowerment?

8. Do you provide funding for organizations supporting women's rights? Why or why not?

9. Has your country presented a report before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women? If not, why not? If so, what has been the committee's feedback?

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“Progress of the World’s Women 2015-2016 Summary Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights,” accessed May 25, 2015, report can be viewed at: <http://progress.unwomen.org>

“Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women” (report, fourth world conference on women, Beijing, China, September 4-15, 1995) accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/official.htm>.

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Freedom of Religion or Belief

“to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”
(United Nations Charter)

Religion in the International Community (Historical Perspectives)

According to the Pew Research Center, “more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group” worldwide.⁷¹ Needless to say religion is, and has been, a prevalent topic in individual societies, as well as the international community. Religious groups are not simply groups with whom people associate and make spiritual connections; religion plays a major role in an individual’s identity. With this in mind, it is easy to see how religion can so frequently influence the political, economic and social realms of society.

Religion throughout the global community plays one of the most influential roles. Religion can act as both a constructive link and a destructive divider among people of different races, ethnicities, genders, ages, and social classes. Although one of the fundamental concepts of most religions is peace, many differences in religious beliefs have resulted in war or other violent conflicts. In 1989, UNESCO held a symposium called “No World Peace Without Religious

⁷¹ “The Global Religious Landscape,” *Pew Research Center*, December 18, 2012, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>.

Peace,” affirming in the title alone the powerful influence that religion has on global conditions.⁷²

In order to identify the benefits and consequences of religion on an international level, we must study the progress made thus far and take the necessary steps to prevent the problems caused by religious differences or threats to religious beliefs. Examination of the United Nations’ previous work to protect this freedom, analysis of the oppression caused due to this freedom, and acknowledgment of the groups most vulnerable to this issue will help us understand and overcome this struggle.

The issue of freedom of religion or belief is one that has been addressed by numerous committees of the United Nations; however, there has never been an agreed upon definition of religion. The statement often referenced in terms of the freedom of religion or belief is the Human Rights Committee’s General Comment 22, Article 18, which “protects theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs, as well as the right not to profess any religion or belief.”⁷³ This partial definition and many others stress the importance of including both the terms *religion* and *belief*, so as not to limit the freedom to support only “traditional religions” nor to allow discrimination against religious minorities.⁷⁴

Patterns have been identified on how religion affects the political, social, and economic aspects of society. Overall, the various studies show that a strong religious population can be both beneficial and detrimental to a community. For instance, religion has been linked to

⁷² David W. Shenk, “Global Gods: Exploring the Roles of Religions in Modern Societies,” *Herald Press*, 1995.

⁷³ Michael Roan, “Study Guide: Freedom of Religion or Belief,” *University of Minnesota Human Rights Center*, 2003, <https://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/studyguides/religion.html>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

improving social stability within families, communities, and society as a whole.⁷⁵ Many studies have shown a correlation between regular church attendance and lower rates of domestic violence and substance abuse.⁷⁶ However, greater church attendance has reflected negatively on economic performance”.⁷⁷ The religious majority of a region may also influence the political realm, which can result in either a negative impact on a religious minority or bring about a greater moral awareness within the culture. Weighing the positives and the negatives of the effects of religion on society is not as important as understanding the power or the influence that religion holds. Each society reacts differently to the influence of religion, so there is not one predictable set of outcomes based on the circumstances, but it is easy to presume that religion will have an impact in general.

Although the benefits of a predominantly religious society cannot be overlooked, there are some negative effects including discrimination, oppression, and persecution. All three of these have been pinpointed by committees of the United Nations, specifically the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).⁷⁸ Issues of religious discrimination have been addressed in order to prevent restriction of people’s civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights; this includes limited access to public education, health services, or public posts.⁷⁹ States are required to protect all individuals and groups, particularly those with the potential of being

⁷⁵ Patrick F. Fagan, “Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability,” *The Heritage Foundation*, December 18, 2006,

<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2006/12/why-religion-matters-even-more-the-impact-of-religious-practice-on-social-stability>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Robert J. Barro and Rachel M. McCleary, “Religion and Economic Growth,” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, May 2003,

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w9682.pdf>

⁷⁸ “Speak up Stop Discrimination,” *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination_religious.aspx.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

harmed, through the “obligation to respect,” the “obligation to protect,” and the “obligation to fulfill” summarized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as the “core” of human rights treaties.⁸⁰ “Obligation to respect” encourages tolerance of all religions and beliefs. “Obligation to protect” promotes equal rights under legislation. “Obligation to fulfill” requires that the freedoms and rights granted to all people be implemented through the state.

Religious oppression tends to be more harmful than discrimination, but it comes from the same idea that there is a certain inequality within a country based on one’s religion or belief. For example, a major contributing factor to the current violence in Myanmar is the result of the oppression of the Muslim population by the Buddhist government, reflecting deep-seated concerns of the Buddhist population in the Rakhine State.⁸¹ Simply put, oppression occurs when there is a very clear majority or group in a position of power and therefore a very clear minority at a disadvantage relative to that group, such as Palestinians living in Israel. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states in Article 26 that, “All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as [...] religion [...]”⁸² Religious persecution can often be the result of discrimination and oppression as reflected in the situation in Myanmar noted above.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Interview with M.McBride (UNHCR Consultant)

⁸² “Rapporteur’s Digest on Freedom of Religion or Belief,” *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/RapporteursDigestFreedomReligionBelief.pdf>.

UN History

Freedom of religion or belief has been an ongoing discussion since the foundation of the United Nations. Religion is addressed in the United Nations Charter (Chapter 1, Article 1), as noted at the beginning of this paper, which stresses the major role that religion plays in the international community.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the 1981 General Assembly “Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief” are the three main documents addressing the rights of religion and belief. The UDHR is the primary document on protecting human rights on an international scale.⁸³ Religion is specifically referenced in several places in this declaration. This declaration was written in response to the crimes against humanity that had occurred leading up to and during World War II, and addresses crimes that were targeted at religion.⁹ The ICCPR includes many important rights regarding religion as well. Article 4 includes a specific clause on non-derogable rights noting that in certain emergency situations, the obligations in the covenant can be disregarded in order to focus on the dire situation at hand.⁸⁴ However, it also notes that there are certain non-derogable rights regarding which, no matter what the situation, the rights cannot be denied; included in these is the freedom of religion or belief.⁸⁵ While these two documents identify a broad range of human rights, both civil and political, but the 1981 Declaration specifically addresses religious rights, expanding on various aspects of the freedom of religion and belief.

⁸³ “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, December 10, 1945, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/history.shtml>.

⁸⁴ “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

Basic Freedoms of Religion

The freedom of religion and belief is much more elaborate than simply having the right to declare a religion. There are three main categories of religious freedom addressed by the United Nations: “the freedom to adopt, change, or renounce a religion or belief, freedom from coercion, and the right to manifest one’s freedom of religion”.⁸⁶ At the core of these freedoms is the freedom of choice.

The UDHR, ICCPR, and *1981 Declaration of the General Assembly* include almost identical phrases regarding everyone’s right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one’s choice.⁸⁷ They also note that a person’s right to subscribe to a religion or hold certain beliefs shall not be infringed.

A crucial aspect of the freedom of religion is the freedom from coercion, in the sense that no person should feel forced to join or leave any religion based on fear, persuasion, or other external influence. As mentioned before, a person’s religious beliefs are often connected to his or her identity, and if they felt coerced into these beliefs, it could be detrimental to their identity. Article 18 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) states, “No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.”⁸⁸

All the freedoms identified are only theoretical until the right to manifest one’s belief through ritual and practice is acknowledged. The Special Rapporteur designated by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights identified eleven different ways to manifest one’s

⁸⁶ “Speak up Stop Discrimination,” *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination_religious.aspx.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

belief, protected by the United Nations: the freedom to worship, places to worship, religious symbols, observance of holidays, appointing clergy, teaching and disseminating materials, the rights of parents to ensure religious education, registration, communicate on religious matters, establish and maintain charitable institutions, and conscientious objection.⁸⁹

Vulnerable groups

Even with the current United Nations policies set in place to protect religious freedom, there are a few groups that are more vulnerable than most. For this reason, the United Nations has adopted resolutions and documents to protect these individuals. They fall into seven general categories: women, persons deprived of their liberty, refugees, migrant workers, immigrants, children, and minorities.

Most traditional religions have patriarchal roots, which often causes women to be victimized by their own faith. Through the patriarchal hierarchy, clergy, and teachings, many women lead lives submissive to their male counterparts. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), due for adoption by the General Assembly in late September, will address this issue when they call, *inter alia*, for the empowerment of women.

While it is not the responsibility of a state to interfere in individuals' practice of religion, it is the state's responsibility to make sure that the rights and freedoms of these women are not being infringed upon. The *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) protects women from any type of discrimination or oppression. Often the discrimination occurs through traditions that the society has become accustomed to. Article 2 of CEDAW stipulates that states should "take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to

⁸⁹ Ibid.

modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.”⁹⁰ At the same time policymakers must be careful that the laws protecting women do not infringe upon the rights of a group to practice its religion freely.

There are many persons who are deprived of their liberty and are “subject to certain legitimate constraints.”⁹¹ This does not however constitute the restraint of these persons’ religious beliefs.⁹² There is a set of *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* that protects religious rights of prisoners. Although the freedoms of prisoners are limited, religion is a human right that cannot be taken away under any circumstances.⁹³ Many of the rights of prisoners fall under the right to manifest one’s beliefs. Rule 42 of the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* states, “So far as practicable, every prisoner shall be allowed to satisfy the needs of his religious life by attending the services provided in the institution and having in his possession the books of religious observance and instruction of his denomination.”⁹⁴ The religious rights of prisoners are very broad, but are at least identified in order to open up the topic for further discussion.

Persons who leave their homeland whether by choice or in order to seek refuge often struggle with protecting their religious rights. Refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons, migrant workers, and immigrants, although in vastly different circumstances, struggle with maintaining their religious freedoms after leaving their homeland. About 216 million people (3% of the world’s population) have migrated to another country, and of those only 9% are religiously unaffiliated, so it is important to recognize that their religious rights need to be

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

protected on an international scale.⁹⁵ Refugees are to be granted religious freedom that is congruent to the religious freedom of citizens in the refugees' host country as provided for in the *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees*. Article 4 of this convention states, "The Contracting State shall accord to refugees within their territories treatment at least as favourable as that accorded to their nationals with respect to freedom to practise their religion."⁹⁶ In the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* religious rights are protected for migrant workers.

Children are a specifically vulnerable group because when it comes to religion they often do not have a choice. The United Nations aims to protect children's religious freedom under the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and more specifically "the right... to freedom of thought [and] conscience".⁹⁷ The convention allows for children to maintain their own thoughts on religion and states that they should have a choice to participate. Often the laws are directed at the right for parents to provide religious education for their children.

Ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities are often the most vulnerable and oppressed groups in a society. When policies represent the moral values of the majority and discount those of the minority, it can take away the voice of the minority. This "voice" is protected by the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) which states, "persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their

⁹⁵ "Faith on the Move- The Religious Affiliation of International Migrants," *Pew Research Center*, March 8, 2012,

<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/03/08/religious-migration-exec/>

⁹⁶ "Speak up Stop Discrimination," *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination_religious.aspx.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.”⁹⁸

State religion can often cause distinct minorities to be created within the population, but the Human Rights Committee recognized this issue and in *general comment 22* established a statement protecting those who did not identify with the national religion. Paragraph 9 of this comment states, "The fact that a religion is recognized as a State religion or that it is established as official or traditional or that its followers comprise the majority of the population, shall not result in any impairment of the enjoyment of any of the rights under the Covenant, [...] nor in any discrimination against adherents to other religions or non-believers.”⁹⁹

Conclusion

The United Nations has made tremendous efforts to protect all persons' right to freedom of religion and belief; however, the work is far from complete. It is the responsibility of each nation-state to protect those within its borders from religious discrimination, oppression, and persecution. Religion itself is a powerful tool in encouraging people to promote political, social, and economic change, but when this change is at the expense of others, the original purpose becomes lost.

“Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion” is a phrase repeated through many documents on civil and human rights. This stresses how important the right to individual thought is. Member states with a state religion should specifically protect minorities. Member states with a separation of church and state should protect those in any religion, especially those with the potential of being harmed.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

The United Nations should continue to promote religious tolerance and protect the vulnerable groups and religious minorities. Member states should create systems, which develop awareness of religious discrimination. There are many crimes committed in the name of religion against people across all demographics, so it is necessary to have interreligious and international involvement in order to combat these injustices.

Questions to Consider

1. Does your state have a federally recognized definition of religion/belief?
2. Does your country provide an environment that protects the religious freedoms of immigrants and refugees?
3. How involved is religion within your country's government, and how does that influence the freedom of religion and belief?
4. What legislation has your nation established to protect the religion rights of the various vulnerable groups?
5. In what ways can your country better protect the freedoms of religion and belief?
6. What should the United Nations or bodies within the UN system be doing to promote the protection of the rights to freedom of religion and belief?

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Meeting the Zero Hunger Challenge

A Brief Overview of the International Hunger Targets and Their Progress

On 21 June 2012 at the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon challenged all nations to end hunger by 2030.¹ His “Zero Hunger Challenge” serves as an important reminder of earlier commitments by the international community with respect to extreme poverty and hunger, and it has galvanized further support for reaching a hunger free world within our lifetimes. The 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) in Rome produced the first comprehensive Plan of Action for eradicating hunger with deadlines set for, among others, 2015. The plan calls for reducing by half (from 1996 levels) the number of chronically undernourished people by 2015 at the latest,² and it lays out a road map for reaching food security for all in an integrated and sustainable manner. One hundred eighty-two national governments signed on to these commitments.³ The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),⁴ adopted in 2001 by virtually all nations, include MDG 1c,⁵ which requires halving the *proportion* of people suffering from hunger over a 25-year period, starting in 1990 and ending in 2015. The UN’s Zero Hunger Campaign represents an extension of these goals and a renewed push to

¹ http://un-foodsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Zero_Hunger_Challenge_Press%20release.pdf

² Rome Declaration. <http://www.fao.org/wfs/>

³ State of Food Insecurity (2015), 9. <http://www.fao.org/3/a4ef2d16-70a7-460a-a9ac-2a65a533269a/i4646e.pdf>

⁴ A/RES/55/2

⁵ We Can End Poverty: MDGs and Beyond. <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>

eradicate hunger worldwide in the coming fifteen years. On 25 September 2015, the UN General Assembly officially adopted the new Sustainable Development Goals, embracing the Zero Hunger Challenge. The second goal on the agenda is to “end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” by 2030.⁶ The basic human right to food, enshrined in Article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, forms the moral underpinning of the international hunger reduction and eradication targets.⁷

In the years since Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced his challenge, progress toward MDG 1—and thus the Zero Hunger target—has been made: taken as a whole, the world is a mere percentage point removed from fulfilling its 2001 promise. The percentage of undernourished people in the world has dropped from 23.3 in 1990-92 to 12.9 in 2014-16 (2). However, these percentages belie the actual numbers of hungry people alive today, as approximately 795 million people are still undernourished year-round.⁸ This represents a reduction of 216 million undernourished people since 1990-92; however, it also means that the WFS hunger target has been missed by about 265 million.⁹ Although the state of global food insecurity has certainly improved according to some measures, progress has been uneven. Some countries, notably a number of populous ones like China and Brazil, have greatly outperformed others. The distribution of hunger has changed over the past few decades because of these developments: Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have increased their share of the world’s undernourished, whereas Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia, and Latin America have seen their

⁶ A/70/L.1

⁷ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

⁸ State of Food Insecurity (2015). <http://www.fao.org/3/a4ef2d16-70a7-460a-a9ac-2a65a533269a/i4646e.pdf>

⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

shares shrink significantly.¹⁰ The numbers indicate that sub-Saharan Africa has more undernourished people now than two decades ago and Southern Asia has reduced the incidence of undernourishment by only 10 million, which is insufficient to reach either of the international hunger targets.¹¹ Western Asia has more than doubled the number of undernourished people in the past years due to ongoing political instability and war in the region. Despite the uptick in numbers, the region's share of the world's total undernourished population is still relatively small. Likewise, Oceania is home to a comparatively small percentage; however, the island nations have shown no lasting improvement in tackling hunger over the past decades and this, in itself, is cause for concern.

The Five Components of the Zero Hunger Challenge

Progress toward Zero Hunger is measured according to five criteria that have to be satisfied by 2030.¹² The first point calls for zero stunted children under two years of age, which requires access to sufficient and nutritious food for women during pregnancy and for children up to two years old. Zero stunting also means access to health care, water, sanitation, and education. Women's empowerment should be promoted as well if the mission to eradicate stunted growth in children is to be successful. Important for this sub goal is the elimination of so-called "hidden" hunger, or malnourishment.¹³ Stunting as a result of malnutrition can still occur even when caloric intake is sufficient. Western Africa is a case in point: the prevalence of undernourishment fell by 60 percent over the last 25 years due to rapid progress in Ghana and Nigeria, while the

¹⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Zero Hunger Challenge. <http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>

¹³ State of Food Insecurity (2015), 10. <http://www.fao.org/3/a4ef2d16-70a7-460a-a9ac-2a65a533269a/i4646e.pdf>

percentage of underweight children in the region declined less quickly and remains at 20 percent.¹⁴

The second criterion stipulates that everybody must have 100 percent access to adequate food all year round. To be considered part of the world's 795 million chronically hungry, a person has to suffer from lack of food or essential nutrients *all* year; seasonal hunger does not "count." The fulfillment of this goal, then, will mean that many more people will benefit from better and more reliable access to food. The improvement of agriculture and food systems, the creation of decent employment and social protections, the prevention of excessive price volatility, targeted food assistance, and the expansion of fair and well-functioning markets are among the essential areas that need to be addressed.¹⁵ Conditional cash transfer programmes should be mentioned here, as they have gained traction as a relatively efficient and effective way to break the cycle of hunger and extreme poverty. Mexico pioneered such a programme on a large scale in 1997, while Brazil took the principle to new heights with its *Bolsa Família* programme. India has most recently begun implementing *Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile*, which transfers cash to bank accounts created for the poor.¹⁶ It is saving billions by cutting out middlemen, black markets, and other leakages normally part of antipoverty programmes.

The third and fourth criteria, in particular, are a response to the fact that 78 percent of the world's poor live in rural areas.¹⁷ They therefore call for entirely sustainable food systems, and a 100 percent increase in smallholder productivity and income in the next 15 years.¹⁸ This means the establishment and enforcement of sustainability standards for farm and agribusiness sectors,

¹⁴ Ibid., 21.

¹⁵ <http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>

¹⁶ NYTimes Opinion. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/23/opinion/transforming-the-fight-against-poverty-in-india.html?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&module=opinion-c-col-right-region®ion=opinion-c-col-right-region&WT.nav=opinion-c-col-right-region&_r=1

¹⁷ Achieving Zero Hunger (2015), 11. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4777e.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/challenge.shtml>

governments, and civil society, among others. Sustainable agriculture practices and governance should be rewarded, as well as policies promoting climate resilience and responsible management of land, fisheries, and forests. Poverty reduction means improving smallholders' incomes through creating meaningful rural job opportunities. It also means empowering women, youth, indigenous people, and other populations that are integral to well functioning agrarian and rural communities. Land tenure and access to assets and natural resources must be improved,¹⁹ and agricultural investments have to be responsible and accountable. Often overlooked is the fact that women occupy a key position when it comes to sustainable agriculture and resilient livelihoods. It is imperative to “close the gender gap” in agriculture: if women get equal access to land, resources, opportunities, and legal rights they could bring down global hunger by 100-150 million people, according to FAO estimates.²⁰

The final component of the Zero Hunger Challenge specifies that there cannot be any loss or waste of food, and consumption must be responsible. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that yearly about a third of food (1.3 billion tons) produced for human consumption is wasted globally. This amounts to a loss of valuable resources and to a larger than necessary carbon footprint.²¹ Moreover, 300 million tons of food that is fit for consumption—enough to end global hunger—is wasted in industrialized nations, while almost 900 million people are chronically hungry.²² FAO has partnered with Messe Düsseldorf in the SAVE FOOD initiative to bring together donors and agencies in order to implement a food waste reduction programme. In collaboration with the United Nations

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Closing the Gender Gap in Agriculture. <http://www.fao.org/sofa/gender/home/en/>

²¹ Food Loss and Food Waste. <http://www.fao.org/food-loss-and-food-waste/en/>

²² <http://www.thinkeatsave.org/index.php/about/about-the-campaign>

Environmental Programme, SAVE FOOD's Think.Eat.Save campaign²³ has managed to raise public awareness and has already sparked food saving and zero waste initiatives worldwide.

FAO in Action: Regional Initiatives

In 1999, the UN Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights further defined the right to adequate food in General Comment 12,²⁴ building on the language of FAO's 1996 WFS Plan of Action. It establishes the right to food broadly, and defines it as “indivisibly linked to the inherent human dignity of the person” and “indispensable for the fulfillment of other human rights.”²⁵ Importantly, it obliges all 164 States that are a party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights “to *respect*, to *protect*, and to *fulfill*” access to food for all.²⁶ This means that states cannot interfere with people's access to food, while they must simultaneously ensure no other individual or business deprives people of their access to food. The fulfillment clause has two implications: governments should help create the opportunities for people to secure their own livelihoods, and governments need to provide food—or the means to food—directly to people when access to food is out of reach (for reasons beyond their control).²⁷ “Ensuring humanity's freedom from hunger” is at the core of FAO's mission.²⁸ The organization serves as a kind of knowledge hub that connects governments, the private sector, civil society, and development organizations at national, regional, and global levels.

FAO prioritizes a number of areas that are mutually reinforcing and that benefit the strategic objective of global food security. In addition to the elimination of hunger and malnutrition, the objectives are: the sustainability of agriculture, fisheries, and forestry; the

²³ www.thinkeatsave.org

²⁴ CESCR General Comment 12 <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4538838c11.pdf>

²⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Preamble to Basic Texts, Volume I and II (2013). <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/022/K8024E.pdf>

reduction of rural poverty; the inclusion of smallholder farmers in the food and agricultural systems; and the resilience of livelihoods to disasters and crises.²⁹ FAO has a mandate to assist national governments in their efforts to ensure food and nutrition security for their populations. In order to promote these objectives and translate shared knowledge into tangible improvements at the local level, FAO has partnered with governments and organizations in Regional Initiatives and in Country Programming Frameworks.³⁰ There are currently initiatives in five regions with nations that are food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity: Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Near East and North Africa.³¹ A total of fifteen Regional Initiatives exist. And while all of them reinforce the five elements of the Zero Hunger Challenge—increasing agricultural sustainability, for example, directly relates to sustainable food systems—three Initiatives in Africa, Asia, and Latin America specifically target hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition. Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia remain vulnerable to “hidden” hunger due to the prevalence of deficient diets.³² In light of eradicating malnutrition and stunted growth in young children, access to a balanced, as well as a sufficient, dietary intake must be prioritized.

Africa’s Renewed Partnership to End Hunger by 2025 is a Regional Initiative in response to requests for assistance from the Angolan, Ethiopian, Malawian, and Nigerien governments to improve their nations’ food security.³³ The Initiative focuses on increasing agricultural productivity, expanding social protections, and reducing post-harvest losses—in fact, African Union members pledged in the Malabo Declaration of 2014 to halve post-harvest losses by 2025,

²⁹ Our Priorities: The FAO Strategic Objectives. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/018/mi317e/mi317e.pdf>

³⁰ FAO Regional Initiatives. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml968e.pdf>

³¹ Ibid.

³² State of Food Insecurity (2015), 10. <http://www.fao.org/3/a4ef2d16-70a7-460a-a9ac-2a65a533269a/i4646e.pdf>

³³ FAO Regional Initiatives. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml968e.pdf>

which would contribute to ending hunger by that time.³⁴ The Regional Initiative also encompasses an African Centre for Best Practice, Capacity Development, and South-South Cooperation, as well as a think-tank to advance and accelerate hunger eradication in the region. Most African governments have prioritized hunger eradication and improved livelihood resiliency with a special emphasis on agriculture. Agricultural growth can be highly effective in reducing extreme poverty: in sub-Saharan Africa it can be 11 times more so than growth in other sectors.³⁵ Specific challenges to food security in African (sub) regions include the threat of land degradation and desertification, rural and urban youth unemployment, and political instability.

Asia and the Pacific's Zero Hunger Challenge is another Regional Initiative designed to meet the challenge of eradicating hunger and malnutrition in the region by 2025. Asia and the Pacific are home to 100 million stunted children and 62 percent of the world's undernourished population.³⁶ With FAO assistance, Bangladesh has implemented a National Food Policy and a Country Investment Plan (CIP). It includes a monitoring system, which improves the prospects for reducing hunger, as it allocates extra funds toward the CIP.³⁷ The country's National Food Policy Capacity Strengthening Programme serves as a test case and, where successful, as a model for Asia and the Pacific. A major goal is reducing child stunting through improved nutrition. FAO's collaboration with governments in the region has resulted in the formulation of national Zero Hunger action plans. The regional political will and priorities exist without a doubt; it is primarily a shortage of investments and resources that is holding back progress to hunger eradication in Asia and the Pacific.³⁸

³⁴ <http://www.fao.org/africa/events/detail-events/en/c/262470/>

³⁵ State of Food Insecurity (2015), 28. <http://www.fao.org/3/a4ef2d16-70a7-460a-a9ac-2a65a533269a/i4646e.pdf>

³⁶ FAO Regional Initiatives. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-ml968e.pdf>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

A third Regional Initiative with a focus on undernourishment and malnutrition is the Support to the Hunger-Free Latin America and Caribbean Initiative (HFLACI).³⁹ The region as a whole has made enormous strides toward hunger reduction in the past decades and is expected to reach zero hunger by 2025. The issue has become a cross-party policy priority and has gained political momentum, which is in large part a tribute to Brazil's courageous leadership on poverty and hunger reduction. FAO supports—among other regional organizations and platforms—the HFLACI, which leads efforts to strengthen institutional capacities in order to improve food and nutrition security in a number of Mesoamerican countries, Grenada, Haiti, Bolivia, and Paraguay. A recent success in Paraguay includes the passage of a law enabling an expanded school feeding programme. And, in addition, the Legislative Assembly will soon consider a bill strengthening food and nutrition security, as well as one encouraging public procurement of family farm products.⁴⁰

Brazil is Leading by Example: *Fome Zero*

Many poorer nations in the Global South that have begun to prioritize hunger eradication in line with the Millennium Development Goals and in response to the Zero Hunger Challenge look to Brazil for leadership. Then Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (“Lula”) initiated the *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) Program, which was launched in 2003. President Lula's objective was to ensure access to three meals a day for every Brazilian by the end of his presidency, and he made unambiguous the fact that, in the end, the government is responsible for food and nutrition security.⁴¹ What ensued was a major overhaul and expansion of institutions responsible for implementing a series of fairly innovative social protection programmes on an

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The Fome Zero Program, 147. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3023e/i3023e.pdf>

enormous scale. The largest programmes with the biggest scope are the *Bolsa Família*, the National School Meal Program (Pnae), the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (Pronaf), and the Cistern-Building Program.⁴²

The Family Grant (*Bolsa Família*) programme transfers cash to poor families provided they keep their children enrolled in school and in the health care system. Pnae ensures daily meals for children in public schools and day-care centers; the ingredients may be procured from local family farms, thereby helping create better markets for smallholders and family farmers. The Food Acquisition Program is designed to do just that: it ensures family farmers of income as it buys their products for local food distribution programs. Pronaf targets rural poverty by providing subsidized credit and technical assistance to family farmers. The Cistern-Building Program is involved in the construction of rainwater tanks for people in Brazil's semi-arid regions to improve year-round access to (safe) water.⁴³ Hunger in urban settings is targeted by way of food banks, subsidized restaurants, and urban agriculture, among others. These programs have a somewhat smaller profile, however, as the urban population suffering from undernourishment is smaller than similarly impoverished rural populations, which reflects the situation worldwide.

The size, scope, and overall success of the *Fome Zero* program has been an important part of the inspiration for the Secretary-General's Challenge and the subsequent UN's Zero Hunger Campaign.⁴⁴ Brazil has taken seriously its obligations to *fulfill* the right to adequate food for its people. It has concluded that focusing on the poor and ensuring a well-nourished population that has real opportunities to create decent livelihoods is, in fact, the wisest

⁴² The Fome Zero Program, 146. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3023e/i3023e.pdf>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ http://un-foodsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Zero_Hunger_Challenge_Press%20release.pdf

investment any country could make. The results have been impressive: over the 2001-12 period, incomes of the bottom quintile of the population grew three times faster than those of the wealthiest 20 percent, overall poverty dropped from 24.3 to 8.4 percent, while extreme poverty rates fell from 14.0 to 3.5 percent. A 25 percent decrease in severe food insecurity was recorded from 2004-09 and, over the 1996-2006 period, the incidence of child stunting and wasting fell from 13.4 to 6.7 and from 4.2 to 1.8 percent respectively.⁴⁵

A Note of Advocacy

Inclusive economic growth and the reduction of inequality are becoming increasingly central in the fight against global hunger. Zero Hunger can be achieved with a combination of social protections and “pro-poor” investments.⁴⁶ We must accelerate progress toward Zero Hunger because if we do not, and maintain the current rate of (slow) progress, we can expect to reduce undernourishment only by about 145 million people in the next 15 years. This will leave 650 million people in a state of chronic hunger—far from the Zero Hunger target.⁴⁷ Low income countries are unable to make the necessary investments on their own and will necessarily rely on continuous external support until the vicious cycles of extreme poverty and hunger can be broken.⁴⁸ The hesitance or unwillingness of the international community to really tackle hunger represents a huge risk in terms of increasing global instability and mounting future expenses. In all likelihood, the unresolved problems of hunger and poverty will come back to bite us all. The best way forward is to act *now* to eradicate hunger everywhere.

⁴⁵ The State of Food Insecurity (2014), 23. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4030e.pdf>

⁴⁶ Achieving Zero Hunger, vi. <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4777e.pdf>

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., vii.

Questions to Consider

1. Is your country on target to reach zero hunger by 2030? What is your country doing to reduce the prevalence of undernourishment on a national and/or international scale?
2. What concrete steps could you consider to further reduce the number of people suffering from hunger? Would a conditional transfer programme similar to *Bolsa Família* in Brazil or *Jan Dhan* in India be feasible? What are the obstacles to implementing such a programme?
3. What is your country doing to decrease inequality, given that this is one of the major obstacles in fighting hunger?
4. If your country is rich, could you consider investing more funds in a hunger-free world to be reached within our lifetimes?
5. Is your country tackling malnourishment as well as undernourishment? Are there best practices to share?

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Sustainable Food Systems

Sustainable food systems have become a topic of discussion amongst the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and along other bodies of the United Nations. The topic fits into a broader discussion on renewable resources, socioeconomic status, agriculture, and the future. Before creating a discourse on how sustainable food systems should be implemented, it is vital to understand what they are and how they work. It is also important to consider what the United Nations has done to address Sustainable Food systems as a whole and how they have worked to facilitate them in local communities. Naturally, there are barriers to the implementation of sustainable food systems that both the United Nations and communities face which will be addressed.

Sustainable Food Systems Defined

While there is no single definition for a food system, The Committee on World Food Security's report titled *Food Losses and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems* defines a food system as the following: "A food system gathers all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructures, institutions, etc.) and activities that relate to the production, processing, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, and the outputs of

these activities, including socio-economic and environmental outcomes.”⁴⁹ Essentially, a food system is therefore the overall process that food completes by a series of stages. While often just one or more stage of the cycle is analyzed at a time, it can be advantageous to analyze the food system process as a whole. A sustainable food system differs slightly from a food system in that it builds upon the base definition of a food system. The Committee on World Food Security’s report therefore defines Sustainable Food Systems as: “...a food system that ensures food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition of future generations are not compromised.” In other words, a sustainable food system is a food system that successfully produces food for both current and future generations. This successful production should assist rather than hinder the economic, environmental, and social status of the surrounding community.⁵⁰ A sustainable food system, as opposed to an unsustainable food system, takes into account various factors for sustainability. This system must look at the full life cycle of the product from creation to consumption to ensure sustainability at each level.

The Need for Sustainable Food Systems

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is an issue that was first addressed by the Food and Agricultural Organization in 1992. It began to be discussed that the global environment was being affected by unsustainable practices of consumption and production. Currently, the demand for food is anticipated to rise significantly and there are already over a billion people suffering from food-insecurity, meaning they are not able to obtain an adequate amount of

⁴⁹ "Food Loss and Waste in the Context of Sustainable Food Systems." *United Nations Zero Hunger Challenge*. June 29, 2014. Pg. 28. http://www.un.org/en/zerohunger/pdfs/HLPE_FLW_Report-8_EN.pdf

⁵⁰ *ibid*, 31.

nutritious food for themselves. Alternatively, we see a growing epidemic of obesity caused by over-consumption. Neither practice is sustainable. The issue of unsustainable food systems stems from a variety of factors. Food systems depend on natural resources such as water and good soil to produce the necessary amount of food. A growing concern is that many of these resources for one reason or another are increasing in scarcity. Climate change is a contributor to this issue by further decreasing the availability of some resources. Large agricultural productions have led to the overfishing of many oceans and seas as well as land degradation and deforestation. Waste is also created among food systems simply through production but at other stages as well. About one-third of produced food is estimated to be wasted. For such reasons, it is vital that sustainable food systems are discussed and actively pursued.⁵¹

Sustainable Food Systems in Relation to the UN

There are several programs through the United Nations that have strove to facilitate sustainable food systems. Specifically, the FAO-UNEP Sustainable Food Programme (SFSP) whose main goals are: increasing the efficiency of resource use, decreasing the amount of polluting practices, and dealing with food-insecurity.⁵² The Sustainable Food Systems Programme was developed in 2011 and focuses on streamlining initiatives and efforts by multiple organizations towards implementation of more sustainable consumption and production

⁵¹ "The FAO-UNEP Sustainable Food Systems Programme." *United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization*. <http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/ags/docs/SFCP/SustainableFoodSystemsProgramme.pdf>

⁵² "FAO/UNEP Agri-food Task Force on SCP." *United Nations Environment Programme*. <http://www.unep.org/resourceefficiency/Home/Business/SectoralActivities/AgricultureFood/SustainableFoodSystems/FAOUNEPAgrifoodTaskForceonSCP/tabid/78955/Default.aspx>

processes. The SFSP also emphasizes multi-stakeholder engagement and the joining of both local and government agencies to form sustainable systems.⁵³

The RIO +20 Conference on sustainable development included discussion on sustainable food systems. The RIO +20 Conference is vital in this context because it officially established the 10 YFP in 2012.⁵⁴ According to their website, “The 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (10YFP) is a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in both developed and developing countries.”⁵⁵ The 10 YFP was created in response to 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and relates to the Marrakech Process (2003-2012). The Marrakech process was a bottom-up approach involving local, private, and state shareholders that dealt with the needs specific to each region and paved the way for 10 YFP.⁵⁶ The goals of the 10YFP are as follows: “The 10YFP aims at developing, replicating and scaling up SCP and resource efficiency initiatives, at national and regional levels, decoupling environmental degradation and resource use from economic growth, and thus increasing the net contribution of economic activities to poverty eradication and social development.” While each

⁵³ "Sustainable Food Consumption and Production." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. <http://www.fao.org/ag/ags/sustainable-food-consumption-and-production/en/>

⁵⁴ "Letter from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development." (2012): A/CONF.216/5*, *RIO +20 Conference*. June 22, 2012. https://rio20.un.org/sites/rio20.un.org/files/a-conf.216-5_english.pdf

⁵⁵ "What Is the 10YFP?" *United Nations Environment Programme*. <http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Default.aspx?tabid=106245#>

⁵⁶ "10YFP Background Information: From Rio to Rio." *United Nations Environment Programme*. <http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Default.aspx?tabid=106248>

regions needs are specific to them, there is a general sense of responsibility and an expectation for developed countries to take a leadership role.⁵⁷

Also presented at Rio +20 were the preliminary guidelines for The Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture Systems (SAFA). SAFA has since published its official guidelines and it's objectives can be defined as: "The guiding vision of SAFA is that food and agriculture systems worldwide are characterized by all four dimensions of sustainability: good governance, environmental integrity, economic resilience and social well-being."⁵⁸ SAFA is a series of guidelines established to measure and promote more sustainable practices in relation to food production. These assessments are then provided to companies both large and small as well as government agencies so that they may make informed decisions regarding the steps they should take towards sustainability.⁵⁹

Barriers to implementation

A barrier to sustainable food systems that must be addressed is the support of smallholder agriculture and the affect of voluntary standards. Smallholder agriculture is the largest producer of food and raw materials globally and a large source of employment. Smallholders can often become disadvantaged however, with support to smallholders, their profits and innovation can

⁵⁷ "What Is the 10YFP?" *United Nations Environment Programme*.
<http://www.unep.org/10yfp/Default.aspx?tabid=106245#>

⁵⁸ "SAFA Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture Systems Guidelines." 2014. Pg. 2.
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3957e.pdf>

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, V.

increase, providing a decrease in poverty overall. Including smallholders in the discussion about transitions to more sustainable food systems is key.⁶⁰

A looming barrier to the success of sustainable food systems is the success of all aspects of the system. In other words, it is difficult to ensure that each stage of the food system will be sustainable. Livestock plays a key role in this conversation. As the population continues to increase, so does the demand for animal products, especially in countries with significant recent development and industrialization. An increase in livestock systems would support the aspect of the food system that produces food security by ensuring the demand for meat is met, however such an increase would come at a cost. Land degradation and increased greenhouse gases would be two side effects of such an increase and would cause such a food system to be considered unsustainable due to its negative effect on future generations. So the challenges that arise with a constantly growing population create barriers towards the implementation of sustainable food systems.⁶¹

Current Utilization of Sustainable Food Systems

Several communities have been successful at creating sustainable food systems. By examining these cases, patterns of successful techniques may emerge, providing clues as to what strategies may work best to create sustainable food systems globally. As mentioned, it is clear to many experts that as the world population increases, food production must increase but it must do so in a sustainable way, so as not to cause harm to the environment. This practice is seen as Sustainable agricultural intensification, which has emerged as a successful practice in some areas

⁶⁰ Meybeck, Alexandre, and Suzanne Redfern, eds. "Voluntary Standards for Sustainable Food Systems: Challenges and Opportunities." June 12, 2013.

<http://www.pnas.org.ezproxy.humboldt.edu/content/110/52/20878.full.pdf>

⁶¹ Herrero, Mario, and Philip Thornton. "Livestock and Global Change: Emerging Issues for Sustainable Food Systems." *PNAS*. December 24, 2013. <http://www.pnas.org/content/110/52/20878.full>

of the world. According to an article on the matter, Sustainable agricultural intensification is defined as, "...producing more output from the same area of land while reducing the negative environmental impacts and at the same time increasing contributions to natural capital and the flow of environmental services."⁶² There have been many sustainable intensification programs evolving in countries across Africa since the year 2000. Emerging private sectors, development of social capital, and creating helpful policy environments are all factors that have contributed to the growing success of sustainable food systems amongst several African countries.⁶³

Northern Queensland of Australia has also been a region moderately successful at implementing practices to work towards a more sustainable food system. The area has a strong grassroots movement that has worked to shift agricultural production towards more environmentally conscious practices. The factor of locally based community participation has played a large role in moving Northern Queensland towards a more sustainable food system.⁶⁴

Summary

As the need for more sustainable food systems continues to grow globally, so will the discussion within sections of the United Nations, especially the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. As definitions regarding the topic have developed and the main issues are identified, clearer methods towards sustainability are being developed. The United Nations has been quite active, even more so in recent years on implementing framework

⁶² Pretty, Jules, Camilla Toulmin, and Stella Williams. "Sustainable Intensification in African Agriculture." *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability* 9. 2011.
<http://ezproxy.humboldt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/886578716?accountid=11532>.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ McCarthy, Breda L. "Sustainable Food Systems in Northern Queensland." *Journal of Economic and Social Policy* 16, no. 1 (2014): 0_1,0_2,1-18.
<http://ezproxy.humboldt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1550518753?accountid=11532>.

that will provide countries with the tools necessary to create food systems that are sustainable. Naturally, there are several barriers towards sustainability that will need to be addressed as the issue moves forward, but several countries have been successful with implementing practices that have helped to shift them towards more sustainable food systems. This issue is of growing importance and the UN is expected to continue playing a vital role in the creation of more sustainable food systems worldwide.

Questions

1. How sustainable are your country's main food systems?
2. Does your country currently have any measures in place to improve sustainability? If so, what are they?
3. What potential barriers, if any, might your country face in regards to creating and implementing a sustainable food system?
4. Was your country present at the RIO +20 Conference on sustainable development?
5. Has your country provided support to any other country to help assist them work towards sustainability? Has your country received any outside support?
6. Should the sustainability standards of each food system be left up to individual countries or are more comprehensive blanket measures necessary?
7. How might mandatory food system sustainability requirements impact your country?
8. Are voluntary sustainability standards effective enough?

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Land Degradation and Drought

Introduction

While land degradation and drought are not rare occurrences in nature, the complicity of man-made actions has escalated the need to tackle and manage the impacts both events have on the global community. The threat of climate change does not make dealing with these situations any easier. In fact, as seen in many cases, climate change instigates degradation and drought. These situations escalate when they occur in historically poor and rural regions that are usually prone to natural hazards. This paper aims to create a foundation that explains the impacts that natural and man-made factors have had on land degradation and drought, providing a deeper understanding of what land degradation and drought mean for communities around the world, and what the United Nations has done to address this looming issue.

Land Degradation: A Global Crisis

Plaguing almost one third of the world, land degradation is a serious environmental and developmental threat. To put this in perspective, as of today, only 11% of the planet's land is Class I land, or capable of producing crops when conducted by proper management techniques.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ World Meteorological Organization, "Climate and Land Degradation," <https://www.wmo.int/pages/themes/wmoprod/documents/WMO989E.pdf>, accessed 9 October 2015.

This means that careful measures must be taken to ensure that this small percentage of land remains healthy enough to feed the current 7.125 billion people on the planet, and the estimated 8.2 billion people by the year 2020.⁶⁶ Additionally, 52% of the world's agriculture is tended on land impacted by soil degradation, which is the decline of soil health that results in reduced production capacity for the ecosystem.⁶⁷

Land degradation is the deterioration of land by human actions, natural actors, or both, that impacts the capacity for agricultural practices and the survival of ecosystems over a period of time.⁶⁸ Land degradation takes shape in various forms, such as soil degradation, pollution, and drought. It can also be caused by unsustainable agricultural practices and exposure to livestock.⁶⁹ Of course, it is also worth mentioning that natural forces contribute to land degradation as well. In fact, some ecosystems are just naturally susceptible to it. For example, soil degradation by water and wind is experienced in areas where heavy rainfall and strong winds occur frequently.⁷⁰ The combination of human and natural causes impacts the severity of land degradation.

It is equally critical to be conscious of the fact that land is a living, non-renewable resource. It takes a hundred thousand years for a meter-thick layer of arable land to form, and

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, "Desertification Land Degradation and Drought - Some Global Facts and Figures," <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/WDCD/DLDD%20Facts.pdf>, accessed 9 October 2015.

⁶⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Chapter 2: Types of Land Degradation," <http://www.fao.org/docrep/v4360e/v4360e03.htm>, accessed 23 October 2015.

⁶⁹ Michael Stocking, Niamh Murnaghan, "Land Degradation - Guidelines for Field Assessment," *United Nations University*, http://archive.unu.edu/env/plec/l-degrade/D-Ch_2.pdf, 2000.

⁷⁰ Queensland Government, "Types of Erosion," <https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/land/soil/erosion/types/>, 18 December 2013.

only 25 years for that same piece of land to erode down today.⁷¹ It should come as no surprise, then, that one of the indicators of degraded land takes form in decreased crop yields.⁷² A crop yield is the measured output of a crop produced in a given harvest area.⁷³ Unsustainable farming practices are one of the key drivers in reduced crop yields, and examples of these methods vary. Monoculture, for instance, specializes in the cultivation of a single crop.⁷⁴ While the benefit of monoculture is the cheaply-priced crop, one of its downfalls is the overwhelming use of pesticides.⁷⁵ The introduction of chemicals in the pesticides via soil and water allows crop yields to stagnate. Field ploughing is also a method that results in degradation because it exposes nutrient-rich top soil to easily be washed or blown away, resulting in reduced soil fertility.⁷⁶ These are only two of the many unsustainable practices used in agriculture that are responsible for diminishing crop yields, and on a larger scale, the imbalance of food security. The UN has identified four dimensions that ensure food security: 1) physical availability of food: simply put, this refers to the supply of food; 2) economic and physical access to food: this encapsulates the ensuring of food to household via policies that concentrate on income and market prices; 3) food utilization: getting nutritional value from food; and 4) stability of the three aforementioned

⁷¹ Brabant Pierre, "A land degradation assessment and mapping method: a standard guideline proposal," *French Scientific Committee on Desertification*, <http://en.youscribe.com/BookReader/IframeEmbed?productId=1903195&width=auto&height=auto&startPage=4&displayMode=double&documentId=1880970&fullscreen=1&token=>, November 2010.

⁷² Sara J. Scherr and Satya Yadav, "Land Degradation in the Developing World: Implications for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment to 2020," *United States Agency for International Development*, May 1996.

⁷³ Food and Agricultural Organization, Glossary of the FAOSTAT, <http://faostat.fao.org/site/375/default.aspx>, accessed 12 October 2015.

⁷⁴ Mission 2014: Feeding the World, "Ineffective/Inadequate Agricultural Practices," <http://12.000.scripts.mit.edu/mission2014/problems/ineffectiveinadequate-agricultural-practices>, accessed 12 October 2015.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Ibid

dimensions: all three aspects of the definition are required to ensure food security.⁷⁷ With growing populations and the reality of climate change, dealing with these issues becomes more urgent and complicated.⁷⁸ States need to prioritize the monitoring and promotion of sustainable land management so they can possess the capabilities to feed and sustain their populations.

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) predicts that on top of food demand increasing 60% by 2050, the world will need 120 million hectares of land agricultural support, which is roughly the size of South Africa.⁷⁹ Future conditions in South East Asia are raising concerns for food and employment security. Collectively known as the Lower Mekong Basin (LMB), the regions in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam enjoy fertile grounds that yield massive amounts of maize and rice.⁸⁰ Studies predict, however, that rising temperatures and changing weather patterns due to global warming threaten to destabilize the region's rich environment. Hotter and wetter seasons would degrade the land and could potentially cost up to \$18 billion USD in infrastructure.

A report conducted by the U.S. Aid for International Development indicates that the greatest economic impact could lie on worker productivity.⁸¹ Because the LMB relies on the

⁷⁷ FAO Food Security Program, "An Introduction to the Basics of Food Security," <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/al936e/al936e00.pdf>, 2008.

⁷⁸ Food and Agricultural Organization, "Scarcity and degradation of land and water: growing threat to food security," <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/95153/icode/>, 28 November 2011.

⁷⁹ Ed King, "Desertification crisis affecting 168 countries worldwide, study shows," *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/apr/17/desertification>, 17 April 2013.

⁸⁰ Alex Kirby, "South East Asia food basket facing 'shocking' future," *Climate Home*, <http://www.climatechangenews.com/2013/04/02/south-east-asia-food-basket-facing-shocking-future/>, 4 February 2013.

⁸¹ John Talberth, "By the Numbers: Economic Impacts of Climate Change in the Lower Mekong Basin," <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/02/numbers-economic-impacts-climate-change-lower-mekong-basin-0>, 24 February, 2015.

labor of workers in construction, agriculture, and fisheries, altering weather conditions will cost \$8.37 billion USD. The reason for this is because increased exposure to heat can lead to health disorders caused by heat, such as rash, fatigue, cramps, exhaustion, and heat stroke. These setbacks would result in a reduced labor force.

At the micro-level, local families who depend on rice farming are already feeling the effects. Rising temperatures, longer and drier seasons, and late rainfall creates the recipe for a region susceptible to floods. In the Prey Veng province of Cambodia, families, whose main source of income is the cultivation of paddy rice, have suffered from poor harvests due to flooding. Because tending the land requires a lot of labor, some families with small children need to pay for extra help. When there is little yield from the crop, the family has little room to pay for this help so they have no other choice but to take out loans to pay for the costs. The land degradation caused by changing weather patterns results in immediate consequences that further extend the plight of people in environmentally vulnerable areas.

In sum, there is no denying that land degradation requires immediate action from all states and international organizations that value the preservation of agriculture and the well-being of citizens. Man-made factors like ploughing and using pesticides conduces to the present dilemma climate change presents, seen in the cases of Cambodia in the LMB. In addition to the environmental challenges both man-made and natural causes of land degradation add, the effects they have on individuals should spark an urge to combat these problems and promote sustainable practices.

Drought: A Symptom of Land Degradation

Defining drought can be tricky because each region experiences drought differently. For example, six days without rain may be considered a drought in Bali, but the opposite would be true in Libya, which sees an average rainfall of less than 180 mm per year.⁸² The 1996 United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, however, has generally defined drought as the “naturally occurring phenomenon that exists when precipitation has been significantly below normal recorded levels, causing serious hydrological imbalances that adversely affect land resource production systems.”⁸³ In other words, drought is the time period where the effects of scarce precipitation are felt in systems dependent on water. The FAO reports that worldwide, drought has intensified and become more frequent in recent years.⁸⁴ Between 2002 and 2010, Australia experienced multiple droughts that caused a 46% drop of wheat yield in 2006.⁸⁵ Human consumption of water, whether it is for the purpose of production, sustaining agriculture or livestock, or household keeping, heavily impacts how much of a toll a drought has on the environment.⁸⁶

Regarding the severity of drought, Africa’s Sahel region is of particular and pressing concern. Located between the northern part of the Sahara Desert and the southern, more tropical, regions of Africa, the Sahel is notorious for its rough environment and weather patterns that make it vulnerable to droughts. The region’s sporadic precipitation is responsible for historic

⁸² National Drought Mitigation Center, “What is Drought?,” <http://drought.unl.edu/DroughtBasics/WhatisDrought.aspx>, accessed 15 October 2015.

⁸³ “United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,” *United Nations*, accessed 10 October 2015.

⁸⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization, “Drought,” accessed 11 October 2015.

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ United States Geological Survey, “Questions and Answers About Droughts,” <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/qadroughts.html>, 19 August 2015.

droughts, including the one it currently faces, which scientists speculate dates back to the late 1960s.⁸⁷ In recent years, drought-induced famines have been responsible for millions of people going hungry. In 2015, the FAO reported 20 million people as currently affected by food insecurity. Consisting of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, the Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal, the Sahel is one of the world's poorest regions. Up to 45% of the area's source of food and employment stems from agriculture. However, poor harvests arising from droughts consequently lead to limited access to food and opportunities for employment. Taking matters into their own hands, people resort to extreme means to ensure their survival. Heads of households desperately sell the few animals they have on their land to earn some money for food.

Actions Taken by the United Nations

Upon the signing of the Constitution of the Food and Agriculture Organization on October 16, 1945, the FAO was established as an agency of the United Nations. Article I states the functions of the organization, which to this day have been upheld by collecting and sharing data regarding to food, nutrition, and agriculture, and promoting programs that encourage the improvement of agricultural practices.⁸⁸

Working in conjunction with other UN agencies to promote the well-being of global citizens, the FAO's goals are to eradicate hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition, eliminate poverty and achieve economic and social progress, and implement sustainable management and

⁸⁷ Steff Gaultier, "Analysis: Understanding the Sahel Drought," *Al Jazeera*, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/spotlight/saheldrought/2012/06/2012616174721352901.html>, 22 June 2012.

⁸⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Constitution of the Food and Agriculture Organization," <http://www.fao.org/docrep/x5584e/x5584e0i.htm>, 16 October 1945.

use of natural resources.⁸⁹ In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development took place, and from it emerged the concept for the Sustainable Development Goals. As the title suggests, the proposed goals necessitated sustainability in various aspects of an increasingly globalized world by calling on government involvement for providing legal frameworks to ensure environmentally-conscious practices. Furthermore, the goals stress the participating states' commitments to eradicating poverty and maintain that every person has the right to food.⁹⁰ The FAO worked alongside the General Assembly and helped assess goals that were compatible with its mission, thus Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals had contributions by the FAO that focused food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture.⁹¹

In 2006, the Land and Water Division of the FAO launched the Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) project with the support of the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Environment Programme. The purpose was to establish a basis for information on land degradation at the local, national, and global levels. Six countries participated in the LADA project. The conditions of land degradation were analyzed in various regions of the countries, and afterwards those regions were required to implement various environmentally-conscious farming techniques to measure the extent of benefits that came from doing so.⁹² In 2010, the project came to a successful close. South Africa was a participant of the project, and in the

⁸⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization, "About FAO," <http://www.fao.org/about/en/>, accessed 20 October 2015.

⁹⁰ General Assembly, A/RES/66/288, 27 July 2012, accessed 25 October 2015.

⁹¹ Food and Agriculture Organization, "Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals," <http://www.fao.org/post-2015-mdg/background/open-working-group-on-sustainable-development-goals/en/>, accessed 25 October 2015.

⁹² Klaus Klenner, Camillo Risoli, and Markus Metz, "Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/FAO/GEF Project 'LADA,'" file:///Users/danieladiaz/Downloads/LADA_evaluation.pdf, May 2011.

Mpumalanga Province, the benefits of using conservation principles in agriculture were apparent. Eliminating practices like tilling and incorporating crop rotation not only increased crop yield, but also enriched soil and enhanced biodiversity.⁹³ While this report proves that using appropriate means for agriculture solves small-scale degradation, these findings should be used as a supplement for future projects of managing degradation.

Conclusion

There are many obstacles that prevent reliable agriculture systems from being maintained in the countries that need it most. All states need food sources for providing social and economic stability but the influence of changing climate patterns, short-sighted land practices, and historical trends on existing land all play a role in commodity shortages. If communities cannot use the land for agriculture or pasture, they cannot support themselves, let alone develop into global economic players. While some of the effects are beyond the control of humans, such as climate change and drought, international organizations, like the Food and Agriculture Organization, are seeking to create stable, adaptable land use habits in countries threatened by degradation. Temporary aid and consulting done by developed nations do provide short-term benefits, but the UN has made it a priority to manifest world-wide sustainable use practices, which will mitigate risk in these high risk areas. The Sustainable Development Goals initiative outlines humanitarian values that all can agree on, such as an end to poverty, hunger, and economic stagnation, which can only be responsibly accomplished via holistic, sustainable practices. By utilizing the strengths and knowledge of the global community, what could have been a disaster can instead be a mild disturbance.

⁹³ Lianda Lötter, Liesl D. Stronkhorst, Dr Hendrik J. Smith, "Report: Sustainable Land Management Practices of South Africa GW/A/2009/102," file:///Users/danieladiaz/Downloads/Report_Practices_SA.pdf, December 2009.

Questions to Consider

1. How does land degradation and drought affect your country?
2. Has your country been involved with global environmental strategies to combat land degradation and drought?
3. Think about your country's major exports or food sources. How might those pose a threat land and water systems.
4. Does your country have any policies that promote sustainability?
5. Should more resourceful states be allowed to try to help states experiencing land and water crises?

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MUNFW 66th Session
Commission on Population and Development

Delegates,

We are faced with a vast issue that encompasses all member States future in this world. It took thousands of years for the global population to reach 1 billion in the year 1800, while in the brief 200 years to follow has reached approximately 7.3 billion people as of 2015, and is projected to reach the 9 billion mark by the year 2050.¹ This phenomenon of human success is speculated and evidenced to impact all facets of human existence and must be addressed. Since the founding of the United Nations there has been a focus on population and development. In 1946 the Commission on Population was created, and adapted to become the Commission on Population and Development in 1994. The CPD has produced numerous Decisions and Resolutions to confront issues on population trends and the developmental obstacles associated with them.² Most recently the CPD has focused on integrating population issues into sustainable development in conjunction with the post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. Key points that will be addressed in this committee will include states ability to compensate for increased pressures on infrastructure, economic capacity to absorb a growing work force, food-soil-water requirements, housing, and environmental impact (especially including areas of waste disposal and greenhouse gas emissions). Your goal as a delegate should be to identify the important population and development challenges for your state and for the world and begin the process of creating an integrated and cooperative approach to addressing the negative effects of population growth.

Integrating Population Issues into Sustainable Development

Section I: Statement of the Problem.

Triumphs in human ingenuity have resulted in increasingly lowered mortality rates, increased production of food and resources, and massive industrialization, changing the life style of the human species and greatly affecting the face of the planet. These innovations have significantly aided the health and longevity of families world-wide, to the extent of which that within the span of a single lifetime the human population has nearly doubled, reaching 7 billion

¹ UNFPA

² Report of the ICPD 94/10/18

in 2011. This condition of massive growth in population leads us to the divergent path between two schools of thought on the subject. The first is the stance was developed by Robert Malthus³, who held that the resources needed to sustain life grow arithmetically, while population grows exponentially. In Malthusian theory, if population growth is not curbed, it will outpace resource production resulting in devastating worldwide collapse. The opposing mentality, described by Julian Simon, does not see resources falling into deficit. Technologies and increased wealth, in Simon's theory, will allow the humans to reason and invent themselves out of shortages of food and precious materials⁴. However, regardless of which mentality a state holds, intense planning and interdependency must be achieved in order to avoid the more the extreme methods of population management: war, famine, and disease.

Section II: Economic Factors and impacts on population growth

The population growth of a state is determined by birth rate, death rate, and migration patterns. Cultural and economic lineage, population density, and availability of food, water, and medical care in a region can play a significant role in the birth and death rates of states within it. For instance the population in the developed countries of Europe and America is growing at rate of only 0.1% per year, while in developing countries the growth rate is over 2% per year, in some cases reaching well beyond 6% a year. ⁵

³ Robert Malthus, *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1776)

⁴ Julian Simon, *The Ultimate Resource*, (1981)

⁵ United Nations Development Programme World Population Prospects. Population Division Database

Cultural Effect on Fertility

In states where subsistence agriculture and raw material extraction are culturally the main source of employment, typical families trend toward having more children in order to successfully manage a subsistence lifestyle. Children in this type of economy are often actively participating in the workforce at a very young age. Historically this was necessary for economic success at the individual level with income levels being extremely low, more children meant more would live to adulthood and thus, more workers to sustain the family. While this practice of having many children was previously a necessity, it has become culturally ingrained in many regions even after industrialization, putting strain on the system having limited workers supporting a very large population.

In contrast, developed countries tend to have much lower birthrates and child participation (labor) in the economy. As infant mortality is reduced, families tend to choose to have fewer children. Additionally, women tend to take more of a lead role in household incomes and family planning, altering the cultural stigmas in these areas against contraception use, leading to much smaller families.

A factor that could be subject to change is the cultural norm within a State of having many children. As the world economy evolves and shapes a region's need for workers, states have the ability to adjust regulations on and availability of pregnancy prevention methods within their states to compensate for their projected ability to provide for its population.

Median Age and Economic Absorption

The varied fertility rates in the developing and developed states have much different predictions for their future economies. In the developing world, where the median age is largely

much lower, there are very few working age adults in comparison to youth. Currently that forces either high participation of youth in the economy, reducing chances for education and cultivation of a skilled workforce, or high stress on families to support large families with low wages. In addition, have a younger population means there is a larger percentage of the population in child-bearing years, and thus more children are born. As that median-age demographic changes however, the problems facing the developing world will change greatly. With 75% of the continent of Africa's population under the age of 25, the problem will soon transition from too few mature workers to sustain their population, to having an overwhelming growth in numbers of workers into an economy that may be unable to accommodate them with gainful employment.

The median age of the developed world indicates a much different problem set for their populations. Low birthrates and higher life expectancies have the current median age sitting in the mid-thirties to mid-forties age range. As developed countries continue to age it will put more stress on the younger demographic to sustain them as retirees exit the workforce. This has led to migration from developing to developed states, for example guest workers moving to Germany, to compensate for the depleted working age demographic.

Infrastructure

In order to cope with the median age shift occurring in the developing world, massive infrastructure development is required to provide inclusion for the emerging younger demographic. Infrastructure encompasses inter alia access to utilities, medical care, education, and transportation. Using the state of Tunisia as a case study, it had the highest level of education on the African continent, very good ports and airports, the highest electricity access and information distribution, and very efficient agricultural production. What it lacked however was

infrastructure to incorporate the young population into the workforce, and suffered a political and economic collapse. The African continent as a whole has limited infrastructure, only 38% of the population has access to electricity, 10% have access to internet and information distribution, and less than 25% of its road network is paved. This lack of infrastructure adds on average a 30-40% increase to the cost of goods due to transportation and storage capability, and limits the economic growth to less than 2% per year. This crippled infrastructure has no chance to provide gainful employment to the vast majority of its emerging workforce, and African states will undoubtedly suffer because of it.⁶

This situation in Tunisia, and more broadly in Africa, demonstrates the absolute necessity of investing heavily in the infrastructure of developing states in order to provide for the pending influx of workers and consumers caused by high fertility and low infant mortality.

Industrialization and Population Density

As states industrialize, concentration of the workforce drastically increases. In lieu of spread out agricultural trade centered on a local market place, industry develops along infrastructure hubs, creating a migration of workers from rural to urban settings, and requires transportation methods in order to access the global marketplace. As a general rule industry follows infrastructure, and population follows industries. Industries already being ill fitted with a poor infrastructure are further set back by an overwhelming population overloading the housing and transportation networks, preventing economic growth and degrading general sanitation and living conditions.

⁶ Partnership for Africa's Development, Report on Regional Integration and Infrastructure 2013

Using Rio de Janeiro as a case study of this population migration toward industry we can see the effects of population density surrounding industry. With oil refineries, shipyards, steel, metallurgy, petrochemical, gas, chemical, textile, printing, publishing, pharmaceutical, beverages, cement and furniture industries all centralized in Rio de Janeiro, it has experienced a 150% growth in population, approximately 7 million people, over the past 50 years. Presently, despite being a large industry metropolis, 95% of Rio de Janeiro's population lives in poverty, with 22% of its 12 million people living in slums not connected to the infrastructure network. In the past ten years Rio de Janeiro's population living within the network has grown by 3%, while the slums have expanded at a rate of 27%. This indicates the overwhelming migration of workers towards industrial hubs, regardless of the actual access to employment and capacity for housing.⁷

In order to compensate for this tendency, some states are controlling the organic growth of industry and its magnetism of population by carefully zoning where industry can establish itself. The People's Republic of China attempted one such strategy and tried to create cities from scratch that are based on specific industrial needs of the state as a whole. While this effort failed, the concept holds that industrial growth must be carefully planned. This separates the population boom related to each such industry, and can tailor the infrastructure of each city to the needs of the population working there.

Section III: Food, Water, and Medical Care Factors and Impacts to Population Growth

Infant mortality rates

⁷ United Nations Population and Development, *2014 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects*

Prior to Millennium Development Goal 4, high infant mortality rates usually went hand in hand with high birth rates. From 1990-2015 child mortality has been reduced by more than 50%, many states reducing by nearly 2/3rds. This massive reduction has had a positive impact on humanity on the individual family basis, but has also greatly influenced the population boom in many developing states where previously infant mortality was over 150 deaths per 1000 births.⁸

Food production

Population growth versus food production has been a struggle for the world for millennia. The creation of GMOs has improved our ability to provide for the world's growing numbers but the exponential growth in world population has once again pitted humanity against its ability to produce food. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has estimated that if the population reaches its projected 9.1 billion by 2050, world food production must increase by 70% worldwide, with developing states needing to more than double their food production. This estimate does not take into consideration production of food for energy purposes; including this consideration of biofuel production by 2030 will require 35 million hectares of land, approximately the size of France and Spain combined.⁹

Water

While improved well technologies and aqueducts have allowed for increased transportation and access to water in many regions, it is a temporary fix if not coupled with considerations for sustainability. As populations increase exponentially, they demand more resources, including clean water. The significant demand for water in agriculture, which previously discussed has increasingly higher requirements each year, has taxed the limits of the underground reservoirs and local tributaries. According the Millennium Development Goals

⁸ United Nations Millennium Development Goals 2015 Progress chart

⁹ United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

Report of 2012, 11% of the population worldwide still do not have access to clean water, and 40% of that endangered population resides in Sub-Saharan Africa. Unlike energy requirements, there is no alternative to fresh water as the sustaining force for agricultural and biological life. If current usages continue through 2050, the world's populations living in water scarce basins will increase from 1.4 billion to 2.7 billion, nearly doubling. 49% of the world's grain production will be at risk of collapse, and 45% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), approximately \$63 trillion (US), will be severely at risk due to water shortages.¹⁰ Efficient agriculture growth and water usage must be emphasized and researched if these obstacles are to be overcome.

Section IV: Environmental Factors and Impacts to Population Growth

Solid Waste Reduction and Disposal

Waste Management poses a major obstacle to industrializing and urbanizing states as a state's population expands. As population centers become decentralized from their food sources (urbanization), transportation and packaging waste affects nearly all consumable goods. In 2010 the world produced 3.5 million tons of solid waste per day, disposing of which costs about \$205 billion (US) per year. In 2025 these figures will increase to 6 million tons per day, at the cost of \$375 billion (US) per year for disposal. That much solid waste is enough to cover the entire state of Ireland at a depth of 1 meter every year.¹¹ With the predicted population growth rates, solid waste reduction and disposal will be critical drain on resources for all states.

Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gas emissions

Human population and development are closely related to the level of air pollution and greenhouse gases produced by member states. Industrial Economic activity leads to production

¹⁰ United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

¹¹ United Nations Environment Programme

of air pollution from power generation (for example coal power plants), transportation (trucks emitting gas fumes) and industrial production. Air pollution and greenhouse gasses rise into the atmosphere and become transboundary issues. For example, increased commuter traffic in Las Angeles, California in the United States will affect global warming, leading to climate change in India, just as rural India's increased emissions from agriculture and livestock will have an effect on climate patterns in the United States. Air pollution from China's energy production lands in Oregon as acid rain. Greenhouse gas production worldwide will only continue to increase from development and population growth in areas such as housing, food production, raw material extraction, and energy production. This will make it exponentially more difficult to reach the living requirements for the population centers as the impacts of increasing those measures also negatively impact the environment related to them.

Top-soil erosion

Population growth also negative impacts the very soil needed to grow crops to feed the human population. Top-soil erosion is facing serious global depletion by intense agricultural strain and commercial development. Population centers worldwide are dependent on staple crops such as wheat, coffee, cotton, and soy to feed the populace and sustain the economy, while those very crops deplete the soil beyond its capacity to self-repair. These depleted soils are less capable of supporting growth and retaining water, which can lead to immense water pollution and flood risk, as well as having an economic impact of reduced production. In the last 150 years 50% of the world's top-soil has been diminished and irreparably exploited by repeated compaction and loss of soil structure and nutrients¹². The United Nations Food and Agriculture

¹² United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization

Organization has listed Top-soil Erosion as a major obstacle to the world's food production requirements in 2050, as well as water shortages already discussed.

Shifts in population growth will impact the states of the world in many different ways. Some states will have to overcome population decreases while others face exponential growth. All states will face problems, some of which are described above. While increased production is necessary to sustain a growing world population, *sustainable* production is the key to long-term success. Growing industry and churning out products are a futile effort if states strip their nonrenewable assets and decimate their ecosystems beyond repair, leaving future generations with a much larger set of problems than the world now faces.

Section V: Questions to consider.

- Can your state's infrastructure support a growing population? What critical infrastructure needs will your state have in the future? At what point will it become a problem?
- Can your state's economy support the influx of workers and consumers?
- Does your state believe in climate change or have pollution regulations? How will you most likely deal with waste and pollution control with a growing urbanized and industrial population.
- What cultural beliefs does your state have on regulating population growth
- Is your state sustainable with food and water requirements, or does it rely on imports? Are your suppliers likely to remain stable?
- What steps is your state taking to develop sustainable agriculture and water usage?

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International Migration and Development

Introduction

International migration is a global phenomenon that is growing in scope, complexity and impact.¹³ Migration is both a cause and effect of development programs and an intrinsic feature of our ever globalizing world. Today, virtually all countries in the world are simultaneously countries of destination, origin and transit for international migrants.¹⁴ While migration cannot completely substitute for development it does have the unique ability to positively impact and generate growth and development when supported by the right institutions. Traditional migration patterns are complemented today by a whole new set of migratory flows and connectivity, propelled by the ever changing economic, demographic, political, and social conditions of both export and host countries. International migration is a priority of the international community given the rise in global interconnectivity, the complexity of migration patterns and the impact it has on countries, migrants and their families. Therefore, it is in the interest of the entire international community to support the integration of international migration policies into the post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda. This is an important opportunity for Member States to not only advance the benefits of migration, but also address the challenges facing the migration process and improve upon the global governance of migration.

¹³International Migration, Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division

¹⁴Thirteenth Coordination Meeting on International Migration, 12-13 February 2015

Defining Migrant

The term *migrant*, as defined by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without intervention of any external compelling factor. Migrants are people who make the choice to relocate in a voluntary manner. They choose when to leave and where to go, even though these choices are sometimes extremely constrained. Thus, this definition indicates that the term migrant cannot refer to refugees, or other displaced persons who are compelled to leave their homes by involuntary external factors. The Special Rapporteur has proposed that the following persons should be considered as migrants¹⁵:

- (a) Persons who are outside the territory of the State of which there are nationals or citizens, are not subject to its legal protection and are in the territory of another State;
- (b) Persons who do not enjoy the general legal recognition of rights which is inherent in the granting by the host State of the status of refugee, naturalized person or of similar status;
- (c) Persons who do not enjoy either general legal protection of their fundamental rights by virtue of diplomatic agreements, visas or other agreements.

Predisposition of Migrants

Between 1990 and 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide rose over 77 million or by 50 per cent.¹⁶ During this period, an estimated 4.6 million migrants were added

¹⁵Gabriela Rodríguez Pizarro, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human rights in A/57/292

¹⁶International Migration Report 2013, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division

annually. The developed regions played host to 53 million of the 77 million international migrants added worldwide between 1990 and 2013. Developing regions during this period hosted 24 million of the 77 million migrants. In 2013, there were 232 million international migrants globally. Of these migrants, nearly 59% lived in more developed regions, while 41% lived in the less developed regions.

Europe and Asia hosted nearly two thirds of all international migrants: 72 million in Europe and 71 million in Asia. North America hosted the third largest number of international migrants with 53 million, followed by Africa (19 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million), and Oceania (8 million).¹⁷ While overall North America and Europe experienced the largest absolute growth in the number of international migrants between 1990 and 2013, since the year 2000 Asia has added more international migrants than any other major region. From 2000 to 2010, Asia has gained an average of 1.7 million migrants annually. The Asia to Asia migration corridor is the largest in the world, with some 54 million international migrants born in Asia residing in another country in that major area. The Europe to Europe corridor during the period 2010- 2013 came in second, hosting an average of 0.6 million international migrants yearly.

The most predominant form of migration pattern occurs *within* major regions rather than across major regions. This is due to the several economic and social restrictions brought about by inter-regional migration. The majority of all international migrants residing in Africa (82%), Asia (76%), Europe (52%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (6%) were also born in that major area. In Asia, 76% of the increase in the migrant stock resulted from flows within Asia.

¹⁷Table I.1- International Migration Report 2013, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division

Much of this growth resulted from migrant workers originating from South Asia and South-Eastern Asia who were employed by the oil producing countries of Western Asia. Persons displaced by the conflicts in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic also contributed significantly to the increase in the number of international migrants in Western Asia during the period between 2010-2013.¹⁸ In Europe, the increase in the number of international migrants during the 2010-2013 was induced by the economic crisis in the region. Migrants from Eastern Europe moved to Southern and Northern Europe while migrants from Southern Europe moved to Western Europe. In Africa, the increase in international migration was mainly due to the increase in migration from people from Northern Africa moving to Eastern Africa, as well as migrants born in Western Africa who moved to other countries of that region. Migration across regions is possible, especially if certain political, economic, and social conditions permit. In all corridors, refugees and displaced persons contributed significantly to the global increase in international migration.

Benefits of Migration

The narrow realm of economic impacts will no longer suffice as the single determinant of discourse on international migration and development. We have moved significantly beyond this narrow view and now look to include discourse on the social, cultural, and environmental aspects of migration. Experts observed that migration, while not providing a solution for development, should be more fully integrated into national development strategies. In an ever growing globalized network of people, places, and things, the protection of all migrating persons must be made a priority among Member States. In order to ensure that migration patterns remain voluntary, Member States should prioritize poverty reduction and good governance. The global

¹⁸Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development A/69/207

network diminishes barriers to the free movement of goods, services and capital, it is only right that labor is allowed to move just as freely. It is encouraged for Member States to leverage the benefits of migration for development by recognizing the skills acquired by their citizens abroad and capitalizing upon the potential contributions of migrants to their country. By granting dual citizenship and promoting the transnational portability of acquired benefits, countries could enable migrants to participate more easily in circular and return migration.¹⁹ Migration has elicited a modest but positive effect on employment and wages as well as a neutral fiscal impact overall in host countries to migrant communities. Migrants play an essential role in filling needed gaps in the international labor market at all skill levels. Due in part to population ageing in countries of destination, migrants have also played an important role as entrepreneurs and job creators. In order to appropriately acknowledge the positive contributions made by migrants, it is imperative upon the international community to rev up efforts to protect the human rights of vulnerable groups in these communities, particularly migrant women and children.

The Respect of All People

For the full benefits of migration to be realized, the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, must be respected. In designing migration policies, Member States should ensure that the vulnerabilities of migrants, in particular children, adolescents, youth, women and persons with disabilities, are taken into account. Member States must reaffirm that the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and their families should be effectively promoted regardless of their migratory status. In implementing migration policies, countries of origin, transit and destination countries should

¹⁹Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development A/69/207

avoid approaches that exacerbate the vulnerability of migrants. Member States are also urged to ensure migrants' access to fair working conditions. Labor migrants should be viewed not as mere "commodities", but rather as human beings with inalienable human rights. A rights-based approach to migration entails equal access for all migrants to education, health care, housing, social protection and justice, as well as equal pay and the right to join trade unions. Member States must develop a framework for addressing the plight of migrants and their families stranded in dire humanitarian situations, based on the principles of non-discrimination and equality of treatment, and family unity. Noting the importance of addressing deficiencies in the existing framework for labor recruitment in respect of reducing the economic and human costs of migration, it is necessary to expand upon the existing recruitment standards, licensing, monitoring and, when necessary, sanctioning recruitment agencies who fail to act in accordance with international labor standards. In order to ensure that migration is undertaken from choice rather than necessity, Member States should promote the creation of opportunities for decent work in destination countries. Considering that migrant communities send home remittances, transfer knowledge, foster innovation and promote economic activity, they should be embraced as strategic partners in development.

The Plight of Children

With regards to children, the plight of children, adolescents and youth in the context of migration, especially unaccompanied and separated minors, irregular migrant children, and those who remain in countries of origin is an important dimension to consider. In line with obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the importance of providing all children with equal access to health care, education, housing, protection, justice and birth registration, regardless of their migration status must remain an international priority. The best interests of the

child should be a primary consideration in all policies and decisions affecting migrant children, including on allowing children to reside with their parents

Eliminating Migrant Exploitation

The need to eliminate migrant exploitation, including human trafficking, is an imperative inclusion to make when appropriately addressing the exploitation of these vulnerable communities. Bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation plays a critical role in combating the heinous crime of human trafficking. Member States in the past have called for prosecuting cross-border criminal networks and employers hiring undocumented migrants, and for protecting victims of human trafficking, in particular women and girls subject to sexual or commercial exploitation. Delegates have emphasized that enhancing legal channels for migrant communities could help greatly reduce the demand for migrant smuggling and counter abusive practices of employers.

Several entities have undertaken specific initiatives to address the trafficking of migrant communities, especially those in regards to women and children, the most vulnerable subsets of migrant populations. The International Labor Organization, with support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, for instance, has launched a five-year cooperation program aimed at preventing the trafficking of women and girls in Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates and other countries in Asia.²⁰ The International Organization for Migration, in collaboration with UNICEF and other international organizations, has trained representatives from ministries and civil societies in the Caribbean, Eastern Africa and South America on human trafficking, gender-based violence and child

²⁰Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development A/69/207

protection. Furthermore, the International Organization for Migration and UNHCR have collaborated in various task forces to promote a human rights-based approach to people participating in mixed migratory flows in Northern and north-eastern Africa. Effective implementation of anti-human trafficking laws remains a challenge at the national level. The costs of this inaction are intolerably high, with thousands of migrants each year perishing at sea or while crossing international borders.

It is recommended that special attention be given to vulnerable migrants, including asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons. The need to implement policies that ensure safe, orderly and humane pathways of mobility remains imperative. Yet, addressing the needs and rights of migrants while giving due consideration to the legitimate interests of Member States remains a challenge for the international community.

Integrating Migration into the Development Agenda

Based on the growing body of evidence attesting to the multiple contributions of migration, mobility and migrants to sustainable development, the international community has begun to advocate for including migration-related goals and targets in the post-2015 development agenda.²¹ In recent discussions among Member States several priority areas have been identified for maximizing the development benefits of migration while minimizing its human, social and financial costs. These priority areas include: promoting international cooperation and partnerships, facilitating safe, orderly, regular migration practices, enhancing labor mobility, reducing remittance transfer costs, lowering recruitment costs, improving the transferability of acquired rights, international recognition of skills and diplomas acquired

²¹Report of the Secretary-General on International Migration and Development A/69/207

abroad, ending discrimination and combating xenophobia, combatting human trafficking, safeguarding the rights of migrant workers, protecting the human rights of migrants, mitigating the effects of the brain drain, promoting legal identity and birth registration, and finding a solution for refugees and asylum seekers.

Operationalizing the above themes as targets and indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound is crucial for meeting standards of monitoring and accountability for international migration and development.

Questions

1. How does your state identify the relationship between migration and development?
2. Does your state categorize international migration as an integral component of its national security strategy? Why or why not?
3. What policies and institutions are needed to better protect the rights of international migrants?
4. What are the benefits and consequences to international migration?
5. How can this committee better define the difference between a migrant and a refugee?

Given the importance of the current refugee crisis, due consideration on the topic must be made:

6. Does your state consider the refugee crisis brought upon by conflicts in the Middle East and Central America to be of international concern, and therefore deserving of international aid and attention? If so, what measures is your state prepared to take in order to address the issue?
7. What measures and/or policies should this committee implement to better address the development constraints upon countries who are already hosting thousands of refugees?

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Sustainable Urbanization

Urbanization has emerged as a phenomenon of development and is occurring at a rapid pace. In the developing world especially, people migrate to cities in search of prosperity, employment, and poverty reduction. The majority of the world's population lives in urban areas and 2.5 billion more people are predicted to inhabit cities by 2050.²² As the number of urban dwellers steadily increases, people are becoming increasingly dependent upon cities to be beacons of economic, social, and political resources and opportunities. In order to ensure that cities fulfill their potential, it is necessary for the global community to address the challenges that accompany a more urbanized world. Rapid urbanization strains water supply, the environment, sanitation, public health, and housing infrastructure.

The pace of urbanization exemplifies the need for attention to the challenges that urban growth presents. For example, despite original estimates in the 1995 plan for Shanghai, China to gain a population of 15 million by 2020, the city already reached 16 million by 2000¹.

The consequence of not promoting equitable urban development is evident with nearly one billion of city dwellers living in dreadful slum conditions. As pointed out in the Millennium Development Goals, people who reside from slums lack access to safe drinking water, food, education employment opportunities, health services, and as a result tend to die earlier. Recognizing the link between socioeconomic development and urbanization, stronger efforts need to be implemented at the international level to ensure urban growth helps advance development instead of increase poverty.

1. Tansug Ok. "Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2015, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/dtlstict2014d2_en.pdf.

If we want our world to sustain the current pace of urbanization, more effort must be made to create positive links between cities and the living environment. Climate change is exacerbating the risk of natural disasters, and this poses a dangerous threat to city settlements with unprepared infrastructure. Sustainable urbanization requires innovative urban planning strategies that employ more efficient and conscious management of the world's resources – both in developed countries and the developing world.

Analyzing and understanding urban municipal governing models is key to building sustainable, prosperous cities. There are a variety of urban governance models that have been used around the world to address the challenges that accompany rapid urban growth. Drawing upon these tools can help understand how to address stakeholders needs when creating international standards for urban planning and development.

Urbanization and Socio-Economic Development

Sustainable urban development is critical to achieving sustainable economic development. Both the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development goals designated sustainable urbanization as key to alleviating and avoiding increased impoverishment and slum dwelling in developing countries. Well-planned cities hold the potential to propel economic growth. However, without proper planning urban growth can result in land, food, water, and waste management issues. The number of countries experiencing rapid urbanization is increasing. In 1950, only 15% of countries experienced levels of urbanization higher than 60%. In 2014, around half of all countries were more than 60% urban. By 2050, estimates show that almost three-quarters of the world's countries will have urbanization levels greater than 60%.²³

2. "Population Facts," *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division*, August 2014, http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2014-3.pdf

95% of urban expansion will happen in developing nations.²⁴ As of 2014, more than 7 out of every 10 urban residents were in developing countries.²⁵ In fact, current population estimates forecast the largest urban growth to take place in three developing countries. By 2050, there will be 404 million new cities in India, 292 million new cities in China, and 212 million new cities in Nigeria.²⁶ Urban settlements and systems need to be planned with basic human needs in mind. Current urban planning initiatives do not account for the pace of urbanization and thus cannot accommodate the population influx. Since the planned urban infrastructure cannot meet the demands of a rapidly growing population, millions of people live in informal settlements, or slums. In 2012, 525 million urban inhabitants lived under \$1 per day, and 1.2 million urban dwellers lived under \$2 per day.²⁷ Lack of sufficient income and access to services results in severely inadequate water supply and sanitation practices.

This rapid urbanization phenomenon is shifting the landscape of human settlement in developing countries. Housing is a basic social necessity that largely influences peoples' livelihoods and wellbeing. The right to adequate housing is protected by many international human rights conventions. In particular, Article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights recognize the right to adequate housing as a human right.²⁸ Since urban residents account for over half of the world's population, ensuring that they are not living in slums and have access to adequate housing and services helps advance socio-economic development agenda. Slums

3. "Water and Cities, Facts and Figures," UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC), December, 17, 2010, http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/swm_cities_zaragoza_2010/pdf/facts_and_figures_long_final_eng.pdf

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6. Tansug Ok. "Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development," *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 2015, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/dtlstict2014d2_en.pdf.

7. "Housing & slum upgrading," *UN Habitat*, 2015, <http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/housing-slum-upgrading/>

are the result of poor planning and implementation. Currently, there are already 828 million people living in slums.²⁹ The increase in citizens living in slums represents 38% of the world's urban growth⁷. Without measures to make urbanization more sustainable, city dwellers will continue to be forced to inhabit informal settlements – which threatens economic and social stability in urban areas. Future urbanization policy must focus on fair housing for urban residents and improving the conditions of those living in existing slums. In 2008, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) launched the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP). To date, PSUP improved the lives of at least 2 million slum dwellers in 160 cities around the world. ³⁰

While urbanization does not cause poverty or stem economic growth, rapid unplanned urbanization can lead to increased urban impoverishment in developing countries. This link between urbanization and socio-economic development exemplifies the urgency to create urban preparation, planning, and implementation standards.

Urbanization and the Environment

Highly populated urban areas should be equipped to thrive in the natural environment without detrimentally affecting it. Cities continue to greatly contribute to climate change through inefficient energy generation, vehicles, industry, and biomass use. Urban areas produce more than half of the world's greenhouse gas emissions. Despite only representing 2% of the Earth's land, urban areas account for up to 80% of energy consumption and 75% of carbon emissions.³¹ Reducing greenhouse gas emissions can help urban areas address other localized urban environmental issues like air pollution and waste. Some cities have taken action to mitigate contributions to climate change.

8. "Sustainable Cities," *UN- The Future We Want*, 2015, <http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/cities.asp>

9. "Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP)," *UN Habitat*, 2015, <http://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/participatory-slum-upgrading/>

10. "Climate Change," *UN Habitat*, 2015, <http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/climate-change/>

Concurrently, unprecedented rapid urban growth has made cities seriously vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Unplanned cities that lack resilience standards will fall susceptible to more frequent natural disasters, flooding, and extreme temperature fluctuations. Over 379 million urban residents live at risk of river flooding, 283 million from severe earthquakes, and 157 million from powerful winds.³² The nature of urban growth and city dwelling – the concentration of humans, assets, and ecosystems – makes natural disasters especially dangerous for cities. Future urban planning standards should take into account the importance of natural hazard resilience to creating sustainable cities. Initiatives led by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) have made strides to lower the risk of disasters and build safer, more resilient communities. The UNISDR’s “Ten Essentials” have become a commonly used methodology by the international community to build city resilience.³³ The UNISDR also released the “2015-2030 Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” which was endorsed by the UN General Assembly.³⁴ Both these initiatives place responsibility in the hands of the State and the State’s local municipal governments to ensure cities are properly reducing disaster risk through resilience measures.

Mumbai, India’s largest city, has suffered from multiple extreme weather disasters in the last decade that resulted in devastating human and economic losses. In 2005, a massive flash flood hit Mumbai causing over 5,000 deaths, major municipal infrastructure damage, and widespread contamination of the city’s food and water. When the city’s resilience was evaluated, it was concluded that three factors were responsible for the scale of the disaster: “an antiquated storm-water drainage system, uncontrolled and unplanned development in the northern suburbs, and the destruction of

11. “Urban resilience goes on-line,” *UNISDR*, April, 9, 2015, <http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/news/view/43622><http://www.unisdr.org/campaign/resilientcities/news/view/43622>

12. “Resilience,” *UN Habitat*, 2015, <http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/resilience/>

13. “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,” *UNISDR*, 2015, <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

mangrove ecosystems”.³⁵ In response to these findings, a Disaster Relief Management plan was devised to protect Mumbai from another crisis. The plan updated the city’s disaster monitoring and warning systems, and took public health measures to safeguard human health before, during, and after extreme weather events.

The events in Mumbai teach a valuable lesson about the significance of preemptive resilience strategies. With climate change intensifying natural disasters, future urban planning standards must both adapt to reduce climate change contributions and increase resilience in highly populated urban communities.

Possible Governance Models for Sustainable Urbanization

In 2014, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) released a report to the General Assembly titled “Effective governance, policymaking, and planning for sustainable urbanization”. This document explored possible governance and management models that address issues of “fragmented decision-making, conflicting policy targets and insufficient coordination” that often arise in disorganized urban governments confronted with rapid urban population growth. Designating an effective governance model that ensures sustainable management is essential for urban areas to thrive and flourish. The best governance solution is dependent upon the city’s particular economic, social, and geographic circumstances, as well as key stakeholders’ priorities.

The mayor-city council model denotes a governing body of elected leaders who possess legislative authority and legitimacy. Cities, such as London and Singapore, have employed this model with success. Ideally, in this model, the elected local government uses their power to implement extensive social and special urban development reforms that effectively manage land use.

14. “Mumbai Disaster Risk Management Master Plan,” *Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals*, 2015, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=2195>

The inter-municipal or regional models are typically devoted to managing large territories, as opposed to a sole city. This model incorporates the collaboration between multiple groups of local and regional governing bodies. For example, Amsterdam is a city-region in which 16 municipalities work together in the interest of social and economic development. The inter-municipal or regional model can foster flexible cooperation and understanding between several stakeholders – i.e. school districts, counties, municipalities, etc.

In centralized models, the national government plays a fundamental role in urban development. This model relies on a hierarchal system of local governance, with the expectation that local authorities are working toward national objectives. Public and private sphere partnerships are prevalent within this model.

The laissez-fair models encourage minimum State governance over urban planning, and is based in the belief that market forces should dictate the nature of urban development. The ECOSOC report notes, “A key characteristic of these models is the deregulation of the housing and urban land markets with different implication for urban growth and land prices”. The efficacy of the laissez-faire model’s reliance upon deregulation policies is highly debated.

Participatory models are centered on a high degree of civic involvement in the municipal decision-making process to ensure “participation, responsiveness, transparency, and accountability”. The participatory model depends upon civic society to determine urban development needs and initiatives.

Integrated models can imply integration horizontally – across varying policy sectors – and/or vertically – across different tiers of government. This model is meant to foster a cooperative, coordinated approach to urban development policy. Integrated urban development policy has seen success in cities such as Copenhagen, Paris, and Mexico City.

Understanding the possible urban governance models is essential to approaching the development of international urban planning standards. In order to achieve sustainable urbanization, States must

determine the governance model that can best address sustainability challenges in their unique political, social, economic context.

Conclusion

The fast upsurge in urbanization should be seen as an opportunity to work toward the Sustainable Development Goals to focus on courses of action that ensure urban living is does not create poverty or exclusivity. Cities that are well planned and well managed with effective governing models can serve as hubs of sustainable economic growth, and can substantially advance the development agenda. Examining these challenges and the current tools used to address them can help the member states of the United Nations move forward in devising a plan to promote sustainable urbanization.

Questions

1. What successes has your government had in regards to urban development? Which best practices would your government encourage for other Member States?
2. What steps can Member States take to build and develop sustainable cities? Which UN-Habitat or UNISDR programs would support these steps?
3. How can Member-States address the existing international effects of rapid urbanization, particularly slums or poor resilience?
4. What governance models help promote sustained stakeholder commitment to sustainable urban planning and development?

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Strengthening the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance

Introduction and History of Humanitarianism

Humanitarian crises continue to grow in scale and complexity in our fast-paced globalizing world, and the system created to aid these crises struggles to keep pace. According to Valerie Amos, former Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the number of people affected by humanitarian crises has almost doubled over the past decade and is still growing. In 2014, international aid organizations launched appeals for 15.6 billion USD to assist 52 million people.¹ That number is now up to 18.8 billion USD – only 26% of which has been received – to aid 78.9 million people according to Stephen O’Brien, the current Emergency Relief Coordinator. These rising numbers can be attributed to demographic changes, urban violence, migration, climate change, and diseases.² Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, authors of *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, discuss how “humanitarian organizations have been in constant motion, frantically attempting to keep pace with the new, growing, and unanticipated demands.”³ Greater awareness of the problems, in part due to more extensive news coverage, has led to positive trends such as increased international support, a growth in the number of relief organizations, and a rise in available resources. However, these benefits do not come without a number of challenges. Increased financial

¹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Strategic Plan 2014-2017

² USG and ERC Stephen O’Brien at ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 17-19 June 2015 in his introduction of the Report of the Secretary-General on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.”

³ Michael Barnett and Thomas Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (Cornell, 2008) pp.1-2.

capabilities do not automatically lead to effective or responsible distribution of resources. Also agencies may need to prioritize which crises should receive support first. Access to victims is not guaranteed in emergency situations and when the crises are in war zones, the physical safety of aid workers also becomes precarious. Although the growth of actors and organizations is a step forward, it is also a step back as the large number of actors crowds “humanitarian space.”

In order to understand humanitarian assistance as it is today, we must first look to the past. According to authors Barnett and Weiss, there are three distinctive periods or eras of humanitarianism.⁴ The first began in the early nineteenth century and continued through the Second World War. It was during this era that people believed society was breaking down with an emergence of “moral ills” caused by urbanization and industrialization. There were many movements for reform, including the successful move to outlaw the transatlantic slave trade. Barnett and Weiss believe that if there were an inaugural moment of international humanitarianism it would be in 1864 with the establishment of the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁵

The second period of humanitarianism began after the end of the Second World War and continued until the end of the Cold War. After suffering through two destructive world wars, the international community demanded reaction to the horrors. It was during this period of humanitarianism that we see the growth of nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations like Oxfam, CARE, and World Vision. Monumental documents such as the 1945 United Nations Charter, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the 1949 Geneva Conventions were all written during this period.⁶

⁴ Barnett, Michael and Weiss, Thomas. “Humanitarianism: A Brief History of the Present” (chapter 1, passim)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

The third period is marked by the end of the Cold War following the collapse of the Soviet Union. A major feature of this period is greater public awareness as a result of increased international news and real-time coverage. While public awareness is critical for mobilizing international action, there is also the drawback of having to “sell” the image and keep the emergency fresh on the public mind before the next one pops up and the “old news” is forgotten.⁷ One has only to think about how quickly the international community has shifted focus from Syria, to the Sahel, to the Mediterranean and Southeast Asian boat crises, to South Sudan, to flooding in Myanmar, and back to Syria to understand this.

Another feature of this period is the shift in focus towards human rights. Human rights have become so central to the Security Council’s agenda that there is a newfound willingness to use military force for human protection. Humanitarian intervention and a shift in the meaning of sovereignty also mark the third period of humanitarianism. But with the growth in actors engaging in relief and assistance, it is essential that efforts are coordinated for optimal efficiency and timeliness.⁸ To address this concern, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the coordination of humanitarian assistance in 1991, after failures of the United Nations system in addressing the plight of Kurds in Iraq following the first Gulf War.⁹

Coordinating Humanitarian Assistance

The international humanitarian coordination system as we know it today would not exist without the pivotal document, A/RES/46/182. Adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 1991, this resolution is the basis for the current coordination system. Entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A/RES/46/182

the resolution lays down the principles for coordination and calls for the creation of crucial structures. The adopted Annex to the resolution is divided into seven sections. The first section, “Guiding Principles,” provides information on what principles to uphold while coordinating and providing humanitarian assistance. Paragraph two states “humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality.” State sovereignty is an additional principle that must be respected; thus it is the right of the affected State to have the primary role in the coordination and implementation of the humanitarian assistance. However, if the emergency has such magnitude and duration that the affected state cannot do this, the international community may respond and contribute to supplement national efforts.¹⁰ The second section of the Annex, “Prevention,” encourages the establishment of an integrated programme that assists developing nations in strengthening their disaster prevention and mitigation. This includes the dissemination of existing and new technical information and relevant technology to help assess, predict, and mitigate future disasters. The third section, “Preparedness,” implores the United Nations system to intensify efforts for the “systematic pooling, analysis and dissemination of early-warning information on natural disasters and other emergencies” so that nations may be better prepared for future crises.¹¹

The fourth section, “Stand-by Capacity,” calls for the Secretary-General to establish a central emergency revolving fund to ensure that organizations within the United Nations system have rapid and coordinated responses.¹² The fifth section, “Consolidated Appeals,” says that potential donors should set aside funds and other resources on a stand-by basis to be distributed

¹⁰ A/RES/46/182

¹¹ The early-warning information is to be made available in an unrestricted and timely manner. See A/RES/46/182, paragraphs 18-20

¹² This fund would contain US\$50 million and would be financed with voluntary contributions. To secure contributions, the Secretary-General should launch an appeal to potential donors and convene the meeting of those donors. See A/RES/46/182, paragraph 24.

quickly in response to the consolidated appeals of the Secretary-General. The sixth section, “Coordination, Cooperation, and Leadership,” establishes the position of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The ERC holds Under Secretary-General rank and is responsible for a large number of tasks, the most important of which are: serving as Chairman for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, processing requests for emergency assistance, managing the funds of what is now the Central Emergency Relief Fund,¹³ and facilitating access to emergency areas by obtaining consent from all parties.¹⁴ The seventh and final section, “Continuum from Relief to Rehabilitation and Development,” suggests that development assistance organizations should be involved from an early stage of relief to ensure long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction.¹⁵

Soon after the resolution was passed, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) which was later reorganized into the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 1998.¹⁶ OCHA is responsible for bringing together all humanitarian actors in order to facilitate coherent responses to emergencies and carries out its coordination function primarily through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. The IASC ensures inter-agency decision-making in response to complex emergencies. These responses include needs assessments, consolidated appeals, field coordination arrangements and the development of humanitarian policies.

¹³ The Central Emergency Revolving Fund was upgraded to the Central Emergency Relief Fund in 2005.

¹⁴ In addition to these tasks, the ERC is also responsible for maintaining an overview of all emergencies through the systematic pooling and analysis of early-warning information, organizing joint inter-agency needs-assessment missions, serving as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and preparing the annual report for the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. See A/RES/46/182 Section VI.

¹⁵ There is supposed to be continued support and cooperation for rehabilitation and reconstruction beyond the initial relief stage. Consider this paragraph when looking for areas of humanitarian coordination to strengthen further.

¹⁶ www.ocha.org

Mechanisms of Coordination

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is a global humanitarian forum established in June of 1992 following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182. The purpose of this forum is to bring together the main relief agencies from the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations. Resolution 46/182 states that the IASC should be composed of “all operational organizations and with a standing invitation to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and the International Organization for Migration. Relevant non-governmental organizations can be invited to participate on an ad hoc basis.”¹⁷ The overall objective of the IASC is to improve delivery of humanitarian assistance through developing policy, dividing responsibilities and addressing gaps in response. If there are disputes between agencies about implementation, the IASC is responsible for resolving the disagreements. The primary objective of all humanitarian assistance is to uphold and protect the rights of affected populations. In order to ensure this there must be a respect for mandates, equal ownership of the Committee among all organizations, and a clear overall objective of effective humanitarian action.

In 2005 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Emergency Relief Coordinator initiated the Humanitarian Reform process. The objective was to enhance the overall effectiveness of humanitarian response. One method that came out of the humanitarian reform is the cluster approach, established to avoid gaps in coverage that were noticed following the tsunami that struck Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries. Clusters are groups of both UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations that work in such sectors as health, shelter, protection, camp management, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, and early recovery. To

¹⁷ See Paragraph 28 of A/RES/46/182

prevent overlap and crowded humanitarian space, the cluster approach is meant to ensure a coordinated plan. OCHA works with lead agencies and global cluster NGOs to develop policy, coordinate, and provide guidance where necessary.

In recent years OCHA and other humanitarian actors have adopted the Transformative Agenda (TA), meant to improve capacity, predictability, accountability, responsibility, leadership and partnership and promote more rapid responses to situations labeled “Level 3” (meaning very serious) emergencies by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Emergency response teams are to be on the ground in 72 hours, assessing needs and initiating responses by the appropriate actors.¹⁸

OCHA’s role is also in support of the Humanitarian Coordinators (HC), who hold the primary responsibility of humanitarian coordination in the field. The Humanitarian Coordinator is responsible for designating Cluster Lead Agencies for all key humanitarian response sectors, in conjunction with the Humanitarian Country Team and the ERC. However, the clusters are only activated if deemed necessary by the Humanitarian Coordinator or the Humanitarian Country Teams.¹⁹ These new approaches are all attempts to further coordinate humanitarian assistance in the hopes of efficiency. However, it is also important to mention just a few of the main agencies who provide the majority of humanitarian assistance.

Main Agencies

When crisis strikes, there are multiple agencies that are the first on the ground delivering aid and ensuring protection of basic rights. The World Food Programme (WFP) and its sister organizations, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), work together to provide food where it is needed during times

¹⁸ Transformative Agenda Powerpoint – unocha.org

¹⁹ Ibid.

of war, civil conflict, and natural disaster.²⁰ Achieving food security is one of the first concerns to be addressed in the wake of disaster or emergency. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) leads and coordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.²¹ While no organization has a mandate to assist internally displaced persons since they are the responsibility of their own country, UNHCR, in fact, has been requested and does assist over 15 million IDPs, more IDPs than refugees. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) helps ensure the organized management of migration and assists in finding a solution to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need.²² The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is responsible for assistance to and protection of Palestinian refugees.²³ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is an organization dedicated to fighting for the rights of children. During humanitarian emergencies, UNICEF attempts to ensure that development programmes are not halted in place of the humanitarian response, encouraging integration of the two instead.²⁴

Financing Humanitarian Aid

There are two types of pooled funds managed by OCHA. The first pooled fund is the Central Emergency Relief Fund, which receives funding through voluntary year-round donations. In times of need the Emergency Relief Coordinator uses the funds to support UN agencies, funds and programmes as well as the International Organization for Migration. Funds are immediately released as long as the proposal shows that the need is urgent enough and that the proposed activities will save lives. The need is determined by a humanitarian needs overview

²⁰ The WFP is a UN agency, the FAO is an intergovernmental agency, and the IFAD is a specialized agency of the UN. <http://www.wfp.org/about>

²¹ See the UNHCR.org website for further history and information.

²² See IOM.org

²³ See UNRWA.org

²⁴ See UNICEF.org

(HNO), which is the outcome of a coordinated needs assessment and analysis. Needs assessment analysis is carried out in partnership by humanitarian actors, to provide credible and accurate information about the impact of a particular crisis and determine the needs of the affected population.²⁵ CERF funding is meant to be used in conjunction with other country-based pooled funds and bilateral funding. Allocating funds does take time, a problem CERF addresses with rapid response grants that can be approved in under 48 hours. Other possible grants provided by CERF are the underfunded emergency grants, for emergencies that have faded from the headlines or have not received sufficient funding. In 2014, CERF received more than 479 million USD – the highest-ever annual total. The ERC allocated 461 million USD for humanitarian activities – 90% of which went to complex emergencies with the other 10% going to natural disaster responses.²⁶

The second pooled funds are Country-based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) which operate in 17 countries and allocate funds directly to UN agencies and the IOM, international and national NGOs, and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations to implement projects. CBPFs are managed by OCHA at the country level under the leadership of a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). It is the responsibility of the Humanitarian Coordinator to allocate funds from donors through an in-country consultative process.²⁷ In 2014, CBPFs received more than 500 million USD from 22 Member States and 453 million USD were allocated to humanitarian actors in complex emergencies and natural disasters in 17 countries.²⁸ Financing humanitarian aid is often one of

²⁵ The released money is then used by humanitarian organizations to deliver food, safe drinking water, and medical supplies. See unocha.org

²⁶ 2015 Report of the Secretary-General on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (A/70/77-E/2015/64)

²⁷ Unocha.org

²⁸ 2015 Report of the Secretary-General on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (A/70/77-E/2015/64)

the greatest challenges confronting agencies, since most crises receive less than two-thirds of the necessary funding, but there are many other challenges that humanitarian actors face.

Challenges Confronting Humanitarian Assistance

At the most recent Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS) of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), held from 15-17 June 2015 in Geneva, Member States gathered to consider the challenges facing humanitarian assistance and what needed to be addressed in the future. The HAS of the ECOSOC is the United Nations' primary platform for Member States to discuss humanitarian assistance. Each year the Secretary-General submits a report, prepared by the OCHA, to ECOSOC and the General Assembly. The report, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (A/70/77-E/2015/64 for 2015) provides the background for Member States' consideration of humanitarian assistance and recommendations for the annual resolution on "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" that is adopted by consensus at each Humanitarian Affairs Segment. The press release following the opening general debate summarized some challenges:

Delegations stated that the current model of financing was not in sync with the ever-growing humanitarian needs around the world. Needs for wider partnerships and the inclusion of more State and non-State actors in providing humanitarian aid were emphasized. Preparedness of local population and resilience to natural disasters were important. Respect for the four principles of humanitarian assistance - humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence – was necessary.²⁹

Another challenge confronting humanitarian assistance is maintaining international cooperation and support for rehabilitation and reconstruction after the initial relief stage. The

²⁹ News release ECOSOC OPENS HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT AND HOLDS GENERAL DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (17 June 2015) See more at: <http://www.noodls.com/view/784372E18F18E28AABA2CBCE1D0EEB575D3BA564?1469xxx1434569522#sthash.EKCvelUH.dpuf>

frequency and intensity with which humanitarian crises are resulting make it difficult for governments and humanitarian organizations to keep up financially and operationally; however, this must not hinder the ability of organizations and Member States to show continued support and attention.

As mentioned in the Report of the Secretary-General and by many concerned Member States at the HAS, other areas of concern are the lack of compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law, and the lack of accountability for violations. According to Under Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien, "Across current conflicts, the most fundamental provisions of international humanitarian and human rights law were not only challenged, but also blatantly disregarded." Major examples of the violation of IHL are the attacks on civilians and the denial of access to assist those in need. If humanitarian organizations are to work as they are mandated, access to victims or affected populations is imperative. This includes safety of the aid workers as they attempt to provide food, medicine, shelter, and health care. According to Emergency Relief Coordinator O'Brien, "over 1,800 incidents involving serious acts or threats of violence against health care facilities or providers had been documented in 2012 and 2013, and 270 humanitarian workers had been killed, kidnapped or seriously wounded in 2014."³⁰ Some Member States noted concern over the new dimensions of conflict that have not been included in international humanitarian law, such as drones, and would like to see the issue addressed in the near future. If solutions are not found to these numerous challenges, emergency humanitarian assistance will remain impeded.

Suggestions for the Future

³⁰ Ibid.

In the latest Report of the Secretary-General, presented by ERC O'Brien at the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment 17-19 June 2015, Mr. O'Brien highlighted two aspects.³¹ The first is that working in partnership with many more groups and organizations as well as joint planning with governments to address root causes will enable us to bring new skills to humanitarian activities. The second aspect of the report is that while governments have the primary responsibility for providing protection, some governments and non-state actors are attacking civilians. Responding to these attacks on civilians and humanitarian and medical personnel is mandatory if we are to respect and uphold international humanitarian law and human rights law. There must be accountability for violations.

Another suggestion would be for Member States to make further efforts to simplify and expedite procedures for the distribution of humanitarian personnel and goods. Resource mobilization over a multi-year framework that is also aligned with development activities to promote resilience and long-term recovery is what is necessary for adequate recovery. Donors should be encouraged to commit to flexible funding for multi-year appeals. Long-term development needs to be a priority, including integrating risk management into national development plans and supporting multi-year humanitarian planning. Another necessity for the future should be increased engagement with local communities to ensure that the needs of affected people are met. One suggestion would be to strengthen efforts protecting and assisting IDPs. This would require adopting and implementing long-term strategies based on frameworks in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. For the improved connection between national and international response, the United Nations system and humanitarian organizations should further strengthen their efforts in supporting national governments to map

³¹ Presentation by Mr. Stephen O'Brien at ECOSOC, 15 June 2015 (Geneva)

emergency preparedness and response capacities.³² At the beginning of the 2015 Humanitarian Affairs Segment, Mexico stated that “the growing number of persons in need and the simultaneous existence of five L3-level humanitarian crises were a reason for serious reflection on the way forward. The static reactive paradigm of the international system ought to be replaced with a dynamic, flexible and preventive model.”³³ It is up to the international community to come together and reflect. The future of humanitarian assistance is in the hands of the Member States of the United Nations.

Questions to Consider

1. What involvement has your Member State had in emergency humanitarian assistance?
2. How can the United Nations system improve its coordination efforts?
3. How can Member States improve their response to humanitarian crises?
4. What can humanitarian organizations do to ensure more effective assistance?
5. Which recommendations from the Secretary-General’s report can your country support in a consensus resolution on this topic?
6. What other issues should be included in such a resolution?
7. What type of humanitarian assistance would be most useful to your country in case of natural disasters such as earthquakes or flooding (e.g. financial aid, infrastructure improvements, technical advice, etc.)?

³² Presentation by Mr. Stephen O’Brien at ECOSOC, 15 June 2015 (Geneva). These suggestions are also reflected in the Secretary-General’s report E/2015/64 and the recommendations for delegates included therein.

³³ Mexico, Intervention at ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, June 2015.

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OCHA website – unocha.org (see especially the sections on “CERF” and “Themes,” including, *inter alia*, displacement, emergency preparedness, emergency response, and humanitarian civilian military coordination)

“Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/77-E/2015/64)

UNHCR website – unhcr.org (see especially section on “What We Do,” for information on advocacy, assistance, capacity-building, and emergency response, as well as other sections on current news stories and country information)

UNICEF website – unicef.org (see especially “UNICEF reaches children in emergencies” which provides information on over half a dozen current crises)

UNRWA website – unrwa.org (see especially the Newsroom section which includes press releases and official statements)

UN Office at Geneva Press Release: “ECOSOC Opens Humanitarian Affairs Segment and holds General Discussions on the Future of Humanitarian Assistance” 17 June 2015.

WFP Website – wfp.org (see especially the section on “Our Work,” which includes information on preparedness and responding to emergencies and “Our Operations,” which discusses current emergencies)

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Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction

Introduction

Climate Change is a pressing issue for the international community. Since the 1950's the global climate has changed in ways that have not been seen in decades to millennia; temperatures have increased causing decreased amounts of ice coverage resulting in rising sea levels. This is caused in part by an increase in the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. While some levels of greenhouse gasses have always been in the atmosphere and allow Earth to maintain temperatures that allow human life, the levels have increased due to emissions of greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide.³⁴ We have remained below a 2 degree Celsius temperature rise, but to continue to stay at this point the Secretary-General has called upon all member states to work toward a solution.³⁵ This issue is affecting member states in many different ways. The results of climate change are changes in temperatures, rising sea levels, lowering amounts of permanent ice, earlier melting of ice, plants flowering earlier, changing animal ranges, more

³⁴ IPCC, 2014: Summary for policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Field, C.B., V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J. Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee, K.L. Ebit, Y.O. Estrada, R.C. Genova, B. Girma, E.S. Kissel, A.N. Levy, S. MacCracken, P.R. Mastrandrea, and L.L. White (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp.1-32.

³⁵ "2015 Pivotal for Finalizing Universal Climate Change Agreement, Ban Tells Member States - UN and Climate Change." UN News Center. February 23, 2015. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.un.org/climatechange/blog/2015/02/2015-pivotal-finalizing-universal-climate-change-agreement-ban-tells-member-states/>.

intense and longer tropical storms and droughts, an increase in wildfires as well as many other issues seen throughout the international community.³⁶

In addition to concerns over climate change, the United Nations has begun focusing on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) was created in December of 1999 and was tasked with ensuring the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. At the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan the member states adopted the “Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.” The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) addresses many aspects, including implementation and follow up.³⁷ This last aspect is very important due to its 10 year mission coming to an end this year and will be discussed below.³⁸

Climate Change Causes

While changes to climate have been seen throughout history, changes in the current levels are significantly different than they were hundreds of thousands of years ago. The levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere remained under approximately 300 parts per million for 650,000 years; however, this is no longer the case. In 2014 the levels of carbon dioxide reached almost 400 parts per million, far higher than past records.³⁹ Most climate scientists, 97% or more, agree that the changes to the climate are most likely due to humans. Many scientific

³⁶ "Global Climate Change: Effects." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>.

³⁷ "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters - Full Text." UNISDR News. 2007. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/1037>.

³⁸ "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction." UNISDR News. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>.

³⁹ "Global Climate Change: Evidence." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>.

organizations have issued statements agreeing with this stance.⁴⁰ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), predicts that there is more than a 90% chance that human activity throughout the past 250 years has led to the warming of our planet. Burning fossil fuels such as coal and oil is greatly contributing to these changes. The burning process of these substances releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Other human actions are contributing to the increase of greenhouse gasses as well, but not to the extent of burning fossil fuels.⁴¹

The sun has played a major role in past changes to climate as seen in events such as the Little Ice Age from 1650 to 1850 where decrease in solar activity led to changes in climate. However, this does not explain current changes. Solar activity has remained constant with only slight increases since 1750. Scientific studies have shown that the current changes could not be caused by changes in solar activity alone, implying that humans are contributing to the change.⁸

Climate Change Effects

Scientists are not sure of all the changes that climate change will bring, but they agree on some. One major change that has already been seen is the increasing of temperatures. This change causes an increase in evaporation, which causes some areas to become drier while creating more precipitation elsewhere, causing other areas to become wetter. The drier areas face a higher chance of wildfires, and the wetter ones have an increased chance of landslides. While there is an increase in precipitation in some areas, snow cover has been decreasing due to rising temperatures, which can also be seen in oceans, due to water's ability to hold in heat. The increase of ocean temperatures causes glaciers and sea ice to melt, increasing sea levels, which can create major problems for small island nations, as well as coastal areas. This can be seen in

⁴⁰ "Global Climate Change: Consensus." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/>.

⁴¹ "Global Climate Change: Causes." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>.

the Arctic Sea Ice, which has decreased in both mass and density in recent years.⁴² Ocean water expands when warm, contributing further to the increasing sea levels.⁴³

Another major effect that scientists are witnessing is an increase in the intensity and occurrence of major storms, specifically an increase of large rainfall events, due to the increase in precipitation.⁴⁴ Also, the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is causing the oceans to absorb more carbon dioxide, leading to more acidic ocean water, with the top layer of the ocean having a 30% increase in acidity.⁴⁵ The changes in the water acidity and ocean temperatures also lead to changes in the sea life and animal ranges, both on land and in the sea.⁴⁶ “For example, boreal forests are invading tundra, reducing habitat for the many unique species that depend on the tundra ecosystem, such as caribou, arctic fox, and snowy owls.”⁴⁷ Warm water fish are moving to previously cold waters, and the cold water fish are losing their habitats.⁴⁸

There is no end to these changes in sight. The IPCC has predicted a change to the mean global temperature from as little as 0.3 degrees Celsius, and as much as 4.8 degrees Celsius, for the years 2081-2100 relative to 1986-2005. These changes will be seen more rapidly and drastically in the Arctic region, leading to a continued melting of the ice in this area. These predictions are dependent on the emission plan that is put in place, with a 0.3 to 1.7 degrees

⁴² "Global Climate Change: Evidence." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>.

⁴³ "Global Climate Change: Causes." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes/>.

⁴⁴ "Global Climate Change: Evidence." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>.

⁴⁵ "Global Climate Change: Evidence." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/>.

⁴⁶ "Global Climate Change: Effects." Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet. July 9, 2015. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects/>.

⁴⁷ "Ecosystems Impacts & Adaptation." EPA. August 28, 2014. Accessed July 12, 2015. <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/impacts-adaptation/ecosystems.html>.

⁴⁸ "Ecosystems Impacts & Adaptation." EPA. August 28, 2014. Accessed July 12, 2015. <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/impacts-adaptation/ecosystems.html>.

Celsius change for the most effective plan, suggesting that even if dealt with in the most effective way, this problem will continue past 2100.⁴⁹

What to do About Climate Change

Although the IPCC has found that climate change is bound to continue, they have found ways to slow climate change. The main way is through the use of renewable energy (RE). There are six types of renewable energy: bioenergy, direct solar energy, geothermal energy, hydropower, ocean energy, and wind energy. Studies have found that the “global technical potential for RE is substantially higher than global energy demand.”⁵⁰ While all six types of RE have high potential, solar energy has the highest. Although RE has the potential to exceed global energy needs, in 2008 it accounted for only 12.9% of total global energy usage, with direct solar energy accounting for only 0.1% of total global energy usage. The same year coal accounted for 28.4% of total global energy usage and oil accounted for 34.6%.⁵¹ This means the two sources which lead to high amounts of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere accounted for a total of about 63% of total global energy usage. An increase in RE would allow lower use of these harmful sources of energy. While there are other options for reducing greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, the main focus of the IPCC is the use of RE to cut down the use of fossil fuels.

⁴⁹ IPCC, 2013: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Stocker, T.F., D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y.Xia, V. Bex and P.M. Midgley (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.

⁵⁰ IPCC, 2011: Summary for Policymakers. In: IPCC Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation [O. Edenhofer, R. Pichs-Madruga, Y. Sakona, K. Seyboth, P. Matschoss, S. Kadner, T. Zwickel, P. Eickemeier, G. Hansen, S. Schlomer, C. von Stechow (eds)], Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.

⁵¹ “Climate Change Threatens Irreversible and Dangerous Impacts, but Options Exist to Limit Its Effects - UN and Climate Change.” UN News Center. November 2, 2014. Accessed July 9, 2015.

The IPCC suggests that precautionary measures such as adaptation, especially during development, are important to help reduce the risks of climate change.⁵² There is not one set way to reduce the risks of climate change, because the effects can vary depending on the area, so approaches need to be decided based on what is needed in that area. One adaptation that could help almost every area is diversification of agriculture. Since climate change affects both agriculture and livestock, diversifying these aspects could help with the issue of food insecurity brought about by climate change.

Another important adaptation is the use of appropriate infrastructure, for example building earthquake resistant structures as well as testing them on shake tables to ensure that they will survive a major earthquake in areas where earthquakes pose a major problem. Also, a greater focus on fire retardant materials in drier areas and those expected to dry out, would help reduce the risk of wildfires. In regards to flooding, approaches such as those seen in the Netherlands with levee systems, damming of rivers, and the use of sea openings with moveable barriers to keep from interrupting transport would help reduce the risk of damage caused by flooding.⁵³ Another approach, seen in parts of Asia, is the planting of mangroves in coastal areas to help reduce the risk of flooding.⁵⁴ Adaptive water management techniques can be helpful in both drought and flood areas, because drought areas will see more water scarcity, and flood prone areas will be seeing more polluted water due to the heavy rainfalls that wash pollutants

⁵² "Climate Change Threatens Irreversible and Dangerous Impacts, but Options Exist to Limit Its Effects - UN and Climate Change." UN News Center. November 2, 2014. Accessed July 9, 2015. <http://www.un.org/climatechange/blog/2014/11/climate-change-threatens-irreversible-dangerous-impacts-options-exist-limit-effects/>.

⁵³ Higgins, Andrew. "Lessons for U.S. From a Flood-Prone Land." The New York Times. November 14, 2012. Accessed July 9, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/15/world/europe/netherlands-sets-model-of-flood-prevention.html?_r=0.

⁵⁴ IPCC, 2014

into water systems. These issues, as well as many others, are addressed in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals, which will go into place September 2015.⁵⁵

The United Nations Role in Climate Change

The United Nations has been working with this topic for many years, beginning with the first World Climate Conference in 1979. While this conference did not provide any immediate solutions to the problem, it did set the stage for future Conferences.⁵⁶ In 1988, the UN established the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group of over one thousand scientists who assess and review the worldwide “scientific, technical and socio-economic information” related to climate change to help ensure a worldwide understanding.⁵⁷ Two years after its formation, in 1990, the IPCC, along with the second World Climate Conference, called for a “global treaty on climate change,” and the UN General Assembly began negotiating a framework convention.⁵⁸ The Earth Summit in Rio, 1992, adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which aims to limit global warming, as well as other conventions on climate change such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994 and in 1996 the “UNFCCC Secretariat [was] set up to support action under the convention.”⁵⁹

⁵⁵ "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform." United Nations Sustainable Development. 2015. Accessed September 9, 2015. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

⁵⁶ "Towards a Climate Agreement - UN and Climate Change." UN News Center. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.un.org/climatechange/towards-a-climate-agreement/>.

⁵⁷ "IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change." IPCC - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Accessed July 11, 2015. <http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization.shtml>.

⁵⁸ "Towards a Climate Agreement - UN and Climate Change." UN News Center. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.un.org/climatechange/towards-a-climate-agreement/>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

In 1997 member states adopted the Kyoto Protocol (KP), which was intended to limit the emissions of developed countries, but is scheduled to end in 2020. In 2001 at the third Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Control, the Marrakesh Accords were adopted; these provide the rules for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol (KP), detailing instruments for adaptation and a framework for technology transfer. The Kyoto Protocol (KP) entered into force in 2005.

The 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the UNFCCC drafted the Copenhagen Accord, after which states submitted nonbinding “emissions reductions pledges, or mitigation action pledges.”⁶⁰ These pledges were made official in the Cancun Agreements at the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16). A second commitment period with more thorough guidelines was created for the Kyoto Protocol (KP) in the Doha Amendment at the 8th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP8) in 2012. The year before, in 2011, the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action was drafted and accepted at the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17). This was a “fresh universal, legal agreement to deal with climate change beyond 2020,” aiming at cooperation from all, thus leading to benefits for all members.⁶¹ The Durban Platform was further advanced by adoption of The Green Climate Fund and Long-Term Finance, the Warsaw Framework for REDD Plus, and the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage at the 19th Conference of the Parties and the 9th meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP19/CMP9) in 2013.⁶²

Thus, the United Nations has made significant progress in adopting standards with regard to climate change; however, there is still much to be done. The slowing of climate change now is

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid

vital to help the international community deal with this issue in the long term. This can be done through encouraging emission pledges that are even stricter than in the past. Emissions can be lowered through increased efficiency as well as an increased use of renewable energy (RE). ECOSOC is a major platform for sustainable development in the UN, and climate change plays a major role in this.⁶³ Adaptation techniques need to be encouraged, with member states that are able to do so providing the necessary funding, which developing countries are unable to obtain on their own. These efforts will be important to ensure each State is able to carry out these strategies, to protect their infrastructure as well as their people.

Disaster Risk Reduction and the Hyogo Framework (HFA)

Disasters are increasingly threatening populations, economies, and sustainable development. There are many challenges posed by disasters including food scarcity, access to healthcare, access to clean water, and damage to property. Disaster reduction is a global issue, because not only is there a risk of disaster everywhere, but also, a disaster in one area may have a negative impact on other areas. More than 200 million people per year have been affected by disasters in the past two decades. With factors like climate change increasing the risk of disaster, the need to address the challenges they create is essential.⁶⁴ The use of scenario planning and learning based approaches would be one approach.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in January 2005 provided the opportunity for a systematic approach to reducing risks around the world. The Hyogo Framework (HFA) addresses many issues: “challenges posed by disasters,” review of the

⁶³ "UN Economic and Social Council; Resolutions; Decisions." UN News Center. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/>.

⁶⁴ "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters Extract from the Final Report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction." July 1, 2007. Accessed July 8, 2015. http://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf.

Yokohama Strategy,⁶⁵ “objectives, expected outcome and strategic goals” of the WCDR, “priorities for action 2005-2015,” and “implementation and follow-up.”⁶⁶

The WCDR was given five objectives by the United Nations General Assembly: report on the Yokohama Strategy, ensure the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, share information to help with disaster reduction, increase awareness of the importance of these policies, and increase availability of disaster information for the public as well as management agencies. The expected outcome of the WCDR was “the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.”⁶⁷ In order to reach this outcome states set a few strategic goals: integrate “disaster risk reduction into sustainable development,” strengthen of capacities that help reduce hazards, and incorporate risk reduction approaches systematically.⁶⁸

In addition to setting these goals, the WCDR adopted five priorities for action: ensure disaster risk reduction is both a national and local priority, identify risks and enhance early warning systems, “build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels,” “reduce underlying risk

⁶⁵ The Yokohama Strategy for a Safe World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action, adopted in 1994, provided a guide to reducing the risks of disasters; however it contained many gaps in governance, assessment, monitoring and early warning. "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters Extract from the Final Report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction." July 1, 2007. Accessed July 8, 2015.
http://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf.

⁶⁶ "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters Extract from the Final Report of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction." July 1, 2007. Accessed July 8, 2015.
http://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf.

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Ibid

factors,” and increase preparedness.⁶⁹ The final report from the WCDR in Hyogo goes on to explain activities that were thought to be key to help achieve the five priorities.

The final report also addresses implementation and follow-up, which should occur through a multi-sectoral approach. The report specifically addresses the need to include the development sector, due to its major role in the area of disaster risk reduction. Another aspect important for implementation is the coordination of the many organizations and agencies involved, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations. Region-based approaches are important to ensure the most effective plan in each region. Small island developing states (SIDS) face the largest risks of disaster and thus need support from the international community in disaster risk reduction. Also, least developed countries (LDCs) need support from the international community due to insufficient capacities to respond to disasters. Another group in need of support from the international community is the African continent; disasters make it difficult for Africa to achieve sustainable development. The final report explains that the follow-up to the WCDR is to include all other relevant major conferences, and examine the progress made in disaster risk reduction.⁷⁰

Looking to the Future

With the HFA coming to an end, the third WCDR took place March 14 to 18, 2015, in Sendai, Japan. At this conference states looked back at the HFA and what had been achieved through it, as well as, the experience that was gained in the last ten years; they adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Due to the experience gained during the HFA, the new framework calls for stakeholders to take action, through collective efforts, to

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Ibid.

work to reduce the risks of disasters.⁷¹ The Sendai Framework focuses on the use of more innovative approaches to disaster risk reduction, which have proven to be important. Also, the Sendai Framework focuses more on disaster risk reduction, than disaster reduction. The new framework looks to take the work done through the HFA and expand it further to help in disaster risk reduction.⁷²

At the 20th Conference of the Parties (COP20) held in Lima, Peru, December 2014, “Member States adopted the ‘Lima Call for Climate Action.’”⁷³ This call to action has led the way to the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) being held in Paris December 2015 that will attempt to adopt a universal text on climate change, and is expected to create a “new, ambitious and universally-binding climate agreement.”⁷⁴ The Secretary-General explained that for the agreement coming up in Paris to be “‘meaningful,’” “it ‘must’ provide a strong signal to governments and markets that the world is committed to building a low-carbon future, ‘and that there is no going back.’”⁷⁵ Also, Mr. Ban said that it should be “‘durable so that it provides the private sector with the predictability and policy frameworks it needs to invest in clean energy and climate-resilient approaches.’”⁷⁶ Lastly it needs to “be flexible so that it can incentivize and incorporate more ambitious, ‘science-based nationally determined targets over time.’”⁷⁷ He also

⁷¹ "69/283. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030." UN News Center. June 3, 2015. Accessed July 8, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/283.

⁷² "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030." March 18, 2015. Accessed July 8, 2015. http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf.

⁷³ "2015 Pivotal for Finalizing Universal Climate Change Agreement, Ban Tells Member States - UN and Climate Change." UN News Center. February 23, 2015. Accessed July 8, 2015. <http://www.un.org/climatechange/blog/2015/02/2015-pivotal-finalizing-universal-climate-change-agreement-ban-tells-member-states/>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ "'Journey towards Bold Climate Action Is at a Critical Moment,' UN General Assembly Told." UN News Center. June 29, 2015. Accessed July 11, 2015. <http://www.un.org/climatechange/blog/2015/06/journey-towards-bold-climate-action-critical-moment-un-general-assembly-told/>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

stressed the need for review, as well as more ambitious Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCS) in order to remain on track to stay “on a less-than-2-degree pathway.”⁷⁸ The outcome of this agreement is expected to be a turning point for climate change, and based on how talks have been going on the subject, the Secretary-General is hopeful for a successful outcome.

Questions to Consider

1. What types of climate change are present in your country? What effects do they have?
2. What disasters is your country at risk of? How has your country dealt with this risk? Has it been successful at adapting?
3. Has your country developed any innovative ways to deal with climate change and disaster risk reduction?
4. What was the outcome of the COP21? How will this as well as other climate and development actions taken by the United Nations affect your country? What affects are they having currently?
5. What problems did your State have at working towards the goals of the HFA? Have they been covered in the Sendai Framework? If not, what more could be done?
6. How can the international community ensure the success of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction?
7. Does your country utilize renewable energy? Does it have ideas for the international community to expand the use of renewable energy?

⁷⁸ Ibid.

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Financing for Development

Introduction

Financing for Development is one of the most internationally debated topics within the United Nations. Development is measured by life expectancy, adult literacy, access to all three levels of education, and people's average income, summarized as "human development"⁷⁹ by the World Bank. Often, the issue comes down to the allocation of resources--how can one body decide which country has more need for financing than another? Even if the United Nations comes to a consensus on how to solve an issue, it does not have the means to provide for every solution. Additionally, economic growth does not always yield human development. Practices focused solely on economic growth can cause "greater inequality, higher unemployment, weakened democracy, loss of cultural identity, or overconsumption of natural resources."⁸⁰ States that fail to find solutions to these challenges face a domino effect of issues, including high levels of unemployment, lack of infrastructure and internal resources, foreign debt, and health problems. Economic growth and human development require balanced roles in the United Nation's financing efforts.

Past Attempts to Enhance Financing for Development

⁷⁹ Gable, Susanna, Hans Lofgren, and Israel Osorio-Rodarte. "The Post-2015 Global Agenda: A Framework for Country Diagnostics." World Bank. October 3, 2014. Accessed July 21, 2015. <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2014/10/303491412887765048/ThePost2015GlobalAgendaAFrameworkForCountryDiagnostics.pdf>.

⁸⁰ The World Bank. June 10, 2004. Accessed July 21, 2015. http://www.worldbank.org/depweb/english/beyond/beyondco/beg_01.pdf.

The United Nations system has attempted to combat these obstacles through the involvement and creation of numerous international bodies and conferences. These include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), as well as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and others.

The Monterrey Consensus, adopted at the Monterrey Conference in March of 2002, established a need for poverty reduction and economic growth, distinguishing between countries that are dependent on official development assistance (ODA) and countries that have an adequate infrastructure and human capital. The consensus also highlighted that both ODA and trade are essential for ODA-dependent countries to reach their Millennium Development Goals, especially for the least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa, small island developing states (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). The consensus also recognizes the need for countries to take responsibility for their own poverty reduction but the importance of support from donor countries in the forms of financial aid and open trade. Most notably, the Monterrey Consensus developed a target of 0.7 percent of gross national income (GDI) to be provided for ODA from every donor country for financing development.⁸¹

The world has made progress in financing for development since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus. More bodies are contributing to mobilizing financial, economic, and

⁸¹ HDN Key Correspondent Team. "What Is the Monterrey Consensus?" *Site Sources*. World Bank. Web. 25 July 2015. <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/KFDLP/Resources/461197-1122319506554/What_is_the_Monterrey_Consensus.pdf>.

technical resources for development. This can be attributed to developing countries putting policy frameworks into action in order to better facilitate mobilization, leading to both economic growth and social progress. Developing countries have also increased their presence in world trade and poor countries' debt has been reduced. Overall, these contributions have helped the world move toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Doha Round on Financing for Development followed up the goals of the Monterrey Consensus. The Doha round focused on subjects such as “agriculture, non-agricultural market access (NAMA), services, trade facilitation, rules, the environment, intellectual property, and dispute settlement.”⁸² Overall, the Doha Round sought to increase market access, reduce tariffs, strengthen rules, and ease customs procedures, while being mindful of the environment and intellectual property. But in the end, the Doha round failed to agree on subsidies, mainly agriculture, limiting trading and marketing opportunities for developing countries. Since developing countries are not subsidized, they cannot compete with the American and Europeans' subsidized prices.⁸³ Nevertheless, the Doha round does serve as a framework for progress in taking action for poverty reduction.

Although these conferences and international bodies have made the issues more manageable, the United Nations still faces many barriers when attempting to solve the financing for development issue. The most recent effort to address this issue was the Conference on Financing for Development, held during July 2015 in Addis Ababa.

⁸² Doha Round: What Are They Negotiating? 2015. Accessed August 1, 2015.
https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/update_e.htm.

⁸³ Markheim, Daniella, and Brian M. Riedl. "Farm Subsidies, Free Trade, and the Doha Round." February 5, 2007. Accessed August 2, 2015.

The Conference on Financing for Development

The Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa was a four-day conference “mandated by the General Assembly to assess progress in development financing in the framework of the 2002 Monterrey Consensus.”⁸⁴ The conference aimed to reinvigorate, follow-up, and create a blueprint to support the development of a post-2015 agenda. It was chaired by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Eighteen Heads of State or Government, six Deputy Heads of State or Government, sixty-six ministers and twenty-three vice-ministers for foreign affairs, finance, development cooperation and trade, and thirty-eight other high-level officials from their Governments made statements during the Conference’s eight plenary meetings.⁸⁵

Member States addressed, *inter alia*, the “space and autonomy” of a developing country to distribute domestic resources;⁸⁶ the importance of amicable relationships between partner countries; transparency, accountability, and efficiency; “mobilization and effective use of resources... [an] enabling environment, systemic issues, follow-up processes and learning from partnerships.”⁸⁷ The conference also identified obstacles to these efforts and sought means to give aid to marginalized and vulnerable groups such as indigenous people, children and youth, displaced persons and persons with disabilities.⁸⁸ Other topics of concern were the commitment

⁸⁴ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 15 July, p.1; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3190.doc.htm>

⁸⁵ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Summary of Plenary meetings*, A/CONF.227/CRP.1 (13-16 July 2015), available from <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/1511964E.pdf>

⁸⁶ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.1; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁸⁷ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Summary by the President of the General Assembly of the substantive informal sessions in preparation for the third International Conference on Financing for Development*, A/CONF227/3 (October-December 2014), available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.227/3.

⁸⁸ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Summary of Plenary meetings*, A/CONF.227/CRP.1 (13-16 July 2015), available from <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/1511964E.pdf>.

of developed countries to aid developing countries, sovereignty and the responsibilities of states, the need for a framework for better collaboration and effective action, and tax reform.

Developing countries highlighted the necessity of aid for ODA-dependent countries in order to help them attain their Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 development agenda, especially with regard to least developed countries (LDCs) in Africa, small island developing states (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). These countries need special attention because of their small size, isolation, and/or lack of natural resources. On a related issue Cambodia asked for development aid that would “improve access to the Green Climate Fund to address climate change issues, especially for countries vulnerable to climate change.”⁸⁹ Developing countries also “pressed partner countries to honour—or surpass—overdue assistance pledges and revitalize cooperation so they could catalyse genuine change in the post-2015 era.”⁹⁰ Botswana echoed this sentiment, saying that “adequate, sustainable and predictable funding [is] absolutely essential,”⁹¹ and Zimbabwe stated “While Governments bore the primary responsibility for development, that did not absolve international partners from their duty to complement national efforts.”⁹²

South Africa, on behalf of the Group 77 and China, stated that countries “need to be guided by principles of national sovereignty, ownership, non-conditionality, and non-interference in internal affairs.”⁹³ And continuing on the theme of responsibility, Viet Nam suggested:

⁸⁹ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.1; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁹⁰ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.15; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁹¹ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.12; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁹² “Ibid.”

⁹³ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.6; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

Developing countries must carry out economic reforms, enhance management and administration capacity and improve the investment and business environment to make the best use of internal and external resources.⁹⁴

Donor countries focused on the need for transparency, accountability, and efficient use of ODA and other resources and the responsibility of developing countries to contribute to their own progress. For instance, Norway stated that ODA should be used in “a more catalytic way”, adding that ODA should help “leverage funds from many sources and enable private-sector development.”⁹⁵ Additional donor country comments focused on giving more importance to human rights such as human security⁹⁶ and education, especially for women and girls.⁹⁷ The delegate from Estonia suggested that a “new global partnership must promote human rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, rule of law and good governance.”⁹⁸

Both sides agreed that through collaboration, development and progress could be made toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁹⁹ Such collaboration could occur across governments, civil society, and the private sector. The delegate from Gabon phrased it that the United Nations needs “to build an Addis consensus of trust.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 15 July, p.15; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3190.doc.htm>

⁹⁵ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.11; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁹⁶ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.7; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁹⁷ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.15; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

⁹⁸ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 15 July, p.14; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3190.doc.htm>

⁹⁹ The SDGs will have been adopted by the General Assembly at the Special Session in September, prior to the posting of this paper.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.15; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

At the conclusion of the Conference, the Under-Secretary General for Economic Affairs, Mr. Wu Hongbo, summarized many of the delegates' concerns in the following manner:

The new framework would help align finance flows—domestic and international, public and private—with economic, social and environmental priorities. Its policy actions drew upon the sources of finance, technology, innovation, trade and data, mobilizing the means for global transformation towards sustainable development.¹⁰¹

This concept would enable financing to become a more productive tool by coordinating finance flows to better distribute resources where they are needed. Through this collaborative effort, countries could focus on using financing to enhance their human development. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has stated that “a global effort is needed to ensure that globalization advances and protects human development” which requires “global commitment... and global support.”¹⁰² Many delegates called upon the United Nations to be that global effort in order to provide for their country's human development.

Global Context

Global human development is difficult because of the challenging macroeconomic environment. The vulnerabilities of the international financial and economic system were “exposed by the 2008 world financing and economic crisis,” leading to the unfinished agenda of the Doha round. New challenges of worldwide growth include stock market volatility in emerging economies, debt crises and a rising debt burden in some small states, and heightened geopolitical conflicts in different parts of the world.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 16 July, p.20; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3191.doc.htm>

¹⁰² Malik, K. et. al. (2014). Human Development Report 2014. Retrieved August 15, 2015, from <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf>.

¹⁰³ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Summary of Plenary meetings*, A/CONF.227/CRP.1 (13-16 July 2015), available from <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/1511964E.pdf>.

Additionally, at the Conference on Financing for Development, delegates cited concerns about employment, the need for “the provision of climate-related and other global public good financing,” and credit shortages faced by small and medium-sized enterprises.¹⁰⁴ These challenges affect least developed countries, small island developing states, landlocked developing countries and countries emerging from conflict the most, but attention to these countries means that middle-income countries’ problems are not always sufficiently addressed.

In addition, while developing countries have made progress since the adoption of the Monterrey Consensus with regard to increased levels of domestic savings and increased mobilization of domestic revenues, weak tax administrative capacities, a limited tax base, tax elasticity, and the volatility of sectors being taxed has caused some limitations in raising revenue.¹⁰⁵

Solutions

Despite these challenges, Member States believed that with public and private savings, the United Nations could effectively overcome them. Supporters argued that all sources of finance would need to be used, including public, private, domestic, and international. Using a long-term perspective, new policies, regulations and initiatives could help redistribute goods through different allocation, consumption and production patterns. This would create a more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally protective agenda. Vulnerable countries should be given special attention.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, ECOSOC, Press Release on the *Third International Conference on Financing for Development*, 14 July, p.10; available from <http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/dev3187.doc.htm>

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Third International Conference on Financing for Development: Summary of Plenary meetings*, A/CONF.227/CRP.1 (13-16 July 2015), available from <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/1511964E.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ “Ibid.”

Many delegates made a point to call upon donors to meet their existing aid commitments. Some suggested that donor countries raise their ODA for least developed countries to 0.2 percent of their GDI, and that fifty percent of the ODA should be spent on least developed countries. Policy coherence, untying of aid, harmonization of aid modalities and country ownership were also emphasized as essential for the effective use of aid.

While global trade has expanded greatly in recent years, it lacks the coherence necessary to be a mechanism for change. Bilateral, regional, and interregional free trade and investment agreements have increased rapidly, leaving developing countries to navigate a complicated system by themselves. Countries called for duty-free, quota-free market access for all developing countries in order to combat the shortcomings of the Doha round. The 2013 Bali Package, a newly welcomed strategy, includes plans to help developing countries including aid in agriculture.

Citing that many countries still face debt, members called for the need to provide debt relief measures for countries at risk of debt distress or not covered by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Again, participants stressed that both debtors and creditors share responsibility for the debt crisis. To improve the situation, states called for fair and transparent transactions.

Conclusion

The way forward is presented in part by the outcome document, A/RES/69/313, adopted at the Conference in Addis. In Part I, the document suggests solutions such as “strengthening public policies, regulatory frameworks and finance at all levels.”¹⁰⁷ It cites the importance of

¹⁰⁷ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015: Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)*, A/RES/69/313, (27 July 2015), pp.2-7, available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313.

gender equality and empowerment of women, girls, and children, and calls for addressing diverse needs and challenges of developing countries including giving special attention to “particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing countries” as well as the “specific challenges facing middle-income countries.”¹⁰⁸ At the heart of these issues will be “integrated national financing frameworks” that respect national sovereignty and the responsibility of each country for its own development.

Specific initiatives referred to in Part I of the outcome document include protection and essential public services, increased initiatives to end hunger and malnutrition, a new forum to bridge the infrastructure gap, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, full and productive employment and decent work, protecting ecosystems, and promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.¹⁰⁹

Part II includes action areas to focus on: domestic public resources, domestic and international private business and finance, international development cooperation, international trade as an engine for development, debt and debt sustainability, addressing systemic issues, and efforts in science, technology, innovation and capacity-building.¹¹⁰ Finally, in Part III the document calls attention to the importance of gathering “high quality disaggregated data” along with monitoring and follow-up.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ “Ibid.”

¹⁰⁹ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015: Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)*, A/RES/69/313, (27 July 2015), pp.2-7, available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313.

¹¹⁰ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015: Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)*, A/RES/69/313, (27 July 2015), pp.8-36, available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313.

¹¹¹ United Nations, ECOSOC, *Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2015: Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda)*, A/RES/69/313, (27 July 2015), pp. 36-39, available from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/69/313.

It is now up to Member States and the United Nations system to commit to achieving these goals and find the best ways to implement them as part of the follow up process. This will allow the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to promote real change. In addition, government and institutional stakeholders must devote themselves to implement national policies and measures to reflect the decisions of the Conference. This process can start with consideration of the topic of Financing for Development during this year's Model United Nations ECOSOC session.

Questions to Consider

1. Does your country have a donor or a recipient perspective of financing for development?
How does that affect your opinions of the donor-recipient relationship?
2. What policies has your country implemented prior to the Conference for Financing of Development? Have you begun to implement any of the proposals coming out of the Conference?
3. What barriers does your country face in promoting your human development?
4. Does your country agree that there are more returns from educating and improving the health of women? What actions has your country taken to empower women, children, and youth?
5. How is your country enhancing social protection and essential public services for all?
6. Does your country invest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including in the areas of transport, energy, water, and sanitation?
7. How has your country promoted sustainable industrialization? How does your country address growth and jobs, resources and energy efficiency, pollution and climate change, knowledge sharing, innovation, and/or social inclusion?
8. What actions can the international community, and specifically United Nations agencies, take to enhance your nation's overall development?

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