



# ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

## *70th* SESSION ISSUES BOOK

MEASURES TO COMBAT DEFORESTATION AND DESERTIFICATION

MEASURES TO ADDRESS ORGANIZED CRIME

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS TO ENHANCE NATIONAL  
AND LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

MODEL UNITED NATIONS OF THE FAR WEST



# MODEL UNITED NATIONS OF THE FAR WEST

70TH ANNUAL SESSION

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six main organs of the United Nations. ECOSOC coordinates the work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, ten functional commissions and five regional commissions, receives reports from nine UN funds and programmes and issues policy recommendations to the UN system and to Member States. Under the UN Charter, ECOSOC is responsible for promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress; identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems; facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. ECOSOC's purview extends over 70 percent of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system.

The Council's 54 member Governments are elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms. In carrying out its mandate, ECOSOC consults with academics, business sector representatives and more than 2,500 registered non-governmental organizations.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ISSUES BOOK WAS PREPARED BY THE STUDENTS OF WHITTIER COLLEGE FOR THE 70TH SESSION OF MODEL UNITED NATIONS OF THE FAR WEST



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## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ISSUES BOOK

1. Measures to combat deforestation and desertification
2. Measures to address organized crime
3. Strengthening partnerships to enhance national and local capacity building

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## **MEASURES TO COMBAT DEFORESTATION AND DESERTIFICATION**

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MUNFW 70<sup>th</sup> Session – Economic and Social Council

The world as we know it is rapidly changing. New technology, growing populations and climate change are presenting new challenges for many nations. A globalized world economy and the effects of global warming are severely impacting the very foundations of developing nations, whether socially, economically, or politically. Two issues of the utmost concern are deforestation and desertification.

As suggested by the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Robert Kinley, climate change is not only an environmental issue but rather an issue that hinders development itself.<sup>1</sup> The deforestation and desertification of developing nations contribute to additional pressure being placed upon these countries, which in turn, exacerbates conflict and prevents development. They pose a threat to the protection, restoration, and promotion of the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, as well as creating economic, social and physical conditions that deter long lasting development and hinder nations from the achievement of other SDGs that address poverty, hunger, good health and more.

Climate change affects the world at large, but developing nations often find themselves bearing the brunt of these affects. This is due largely to the geographical location of many developing nations as well as their financial inability to prepare, prevent and rebuild in view of the mounting number of natural disasters and rising sea levels. Climate change, especially harsher weather patterns, can damage infrastructure and affect the livelihoods of civilians. This poses threats to the economic stability of a nation and puts the lives of individuals at risk.<sup>2</sup> Climate change also has a harsh affect on agrarian practices, which are the basis of many Least Developed Countries' (LDCs) and developing

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<sup>1</sup> Kinley, Richard. "Climate Change and Sustainable Development: an International Workshop to Strengthen Research and Understanding." *UNFCCC*, 7 Apr. 2006, [unfccc.int/news/climate-change-and-sustainable-development-an-international-workshop-to-strengthen-research-and-understanding](http://unfccc.int/news/climate-change-and-sustainable-development-an-international-workshop-to-strengthen-research-and-understanding). Accessed 1 Aug. 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Global Affairs Canada - Affaires. "Climate Change in Developing Countries." *G4C*, 24 July 2019, [www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_development-enjeux\\_developpement/environmental\\_protection-protection\\_environnement/climate-climatiques.aspx?lang-eng](http://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/environmental_protection-protection_environnement/climate-climatiques.aspx?lang-eng). Accessed 1 Aug. 2019.



countries' economies. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) suggests that the agrarian economies of developing nations are beneficial to overall development and can assist in their inclusion in the global economy (Role). But LDCs and developing nations face pressures, both internally and externally, that limit their ability to become agriculture reliant nations in the world economy. These pressures include inconsistent rates of production, competitive world markets, weak internal trade structures and more. In addition, the pressures of growing populations and climate change often create economic circumstances that contribute to unsustainable practices, resulting in land degradation.<sup>3</sup> It is in these ways that climate change, resulting in deforestation and desertification, impedes the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. To combat this, the United Nations has several initiatives in place to prevent further degradation of natural habitats that can encourage and aid in achieving sustainable development in line with the goals set for 2030. But tackling deforestation and desertification head on is necessary to ensure all people can enjoy the human rights outlined in the United Nations Charter.

## **DEFORESTATION AND DESERTIFICATION**

Deforestation and desertification are the result of a number of factors including climate change, a rapidly developing world economy, and population growth. The Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization defines deforestation as "the conversion of forested areas to non-forest land use such as arable land, urban use, logged area or wasteland." Deforestation is also the conversion of forest to another land use or the long-term reduction of tree canopy cover below a 10% threshold. Deforestation can result from deliberate removal of forest cover for agriculture or urban development, or it can be an unintentional consequence of uncontrolled grazing, which can prevent the natural regeneration of young trees. The combined effect of grazing and fires can be a major cause of deforestation in dry areas. Deforestation implies the long-term (>10 years) or permanent loss

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<sup>3</sup> "The Role of Agriculture in the Development of LDCs and Their Integration into the World Economy." Commodities and Trade Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *The Role of Agriculture in the Development of LDCs and Their Integration into the World Economy*, 2002.

of forest cover."<sup>4</sup> This also includes a reduction in the quality of forests, "the density and structure of the trees, the ecological services supplied, the biomass of plants and animals, the species diversity and the genetic diversity." It is estimated that nearly 46% of the world's trees have been felled since humans began cutting down forests en masse.<sup>5</sup> In the 26 years between 1990 and 2016, it is estimated that about 1.3 million square kilometers of forests have been cut down.

Trees are critical to maintaining the balance of local and global ecological systems and are key to absorbing the carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases that are entering the earth's atmosphere at increased rates due to emissions from human activity. According to the World Research Institute, they actually serve as mitigators of climate change, with the 23% of tropical tree coverings necessary for the world to meet goals set in the Paris Agreement.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, desertification is the development of environmental changes that occur over time, resulting in a different and less hospitable environment. Desertification is the degradation of land in dry sub-humid, semi-arid and arid areas due to human activities that overexploit or misuse land. It does not refer to the expansion of already existing deserts, but rather comes as a result of land mismanagement due to deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, water scarcity, climate change, political instability, and poverty.<sup>7</sup> Desertification can also be quantified by the long-term or permanent damage of soil quality and water absorption. Whether it is damaged soil or fertile topsoil being blown away, desertification is the destruction of productivity of land and often results in situations where plant life is no longer able to be supported on the same scale as years prior.<sup>8</sup> With one third of the world's land falling into the aforementioned categories, desertification is one of the changes in ecosystems that poses a significant threat to the socioeconomic well being of millions of

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<sup>4</sup> Tejaswi, Giri. "STRENGTHENING MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING ON SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT IN ASIA." FRomeorestry Department Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *MANUAL ON DEFORESTATION, DEGRADATION, AND FRAGMENTATION USING REMOTE SENSING AND GIS*, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Crowther, T. W., et al. "Mapping Tree Density at a Global Scale." *Nature*, vol. 525, no. 7568, 2015, pp. 201–205. doi:10.1038/nature14967.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbs, David, et al. "By the Numbers: The Value of Tropical Forests in the Climate Change Equation." *World Resources Institute*, 4 Oct. 2018. [www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/numbers-value-tropical-forests-climate-change-equation](http://www.wri.org/blog/2018/10/numbers-value-tropical-forests-climate-change-equation).

<sup>7</sup> "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 17 June." *United Nations*, United Nations, 2019. [www.un.org/en/events/desertificationday/](http://www.un.org/en/events/desertificationday/).

<sup>8</sup> NASA. "Defining Desertification." *Earth Observatory*, NASA, 3 Jan. 2007. [earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/Desertification/desertification2.php](http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/features/Desertification/desertification2.php).

people globally.<sup>9</sup> The projected ramifications of desertifications will affect nearly 1.8 billion people residing in water-scarce areas by 2025 and will displace an estimated 145 million people by 2045.<sup>10</sup>

Deforestation greatly affects many emerging economies, as the use of forested areas for other development often allows for less oversight of sustainable land management. According to the FAO, an estimated 18 million acres of forest are lost each year.<sup>11</sup> This is particularly prevalent in a country such as Papua New Guinea where economic practices that center around agriculture, logging, mining and natural resource extraction increase pressures to remove large areas of forest to promote economic growth; it serves as a prime example of the necessity for sustainable forestry practices to encourage development. When economic success for both individuals and the nation is tied to land usage, it is imperative that sustainable practices be utilized. In the case of Papua New Guinea, there has been a decline in the amount of area covered by forests, with an estimated 895,000 acres a year being felled since 2001. This has led to a sharp decline in forest coverage by 15% from 1972 to 2002.<sup>12</sup> Deforestation has also affected the remaining forested areas, particularly near areas where large expanses of trees are cut down for agriculture, logging, roads or housing. The World Wildlife Foundation suggests that this occurs as a result of slash and burn agricultural techniques, stripping of soil nutrients by monoculture plants, trophy hunting and the hunting of endangered species, modified climates as a result of lower rates of CO<sub>2</sub> absorption and altered water cycles that happen as a result of lower water circulation provided by trees. These all alter the delicate balance of remaining forested areas at large.<sup>13</sup> Over the long term, this will affect the quality of life for not only the wildlife within the forest but the people who depend on the land.

Desertification also occurs as a result of land mismanagement and can be a result of deforestation as well. In The Gambia there has been a loss of 100,000 hectares of forests between

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<sup>9</sup> Kannan, A. *Global Environmental Governance and Desertification: a Study of Gulf Cooperation Council Countries*. Concept Pub. Co., 2012.

<sup>10</sup> "World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought 17 June." *United Nations*, United Nations, 2019. [www.un.org/en/events/desertificationday/](http://www.un.org/en/events/desertificationday/).

<sup>11</sup> Bradford, Alina. "Deforestation: Facts, Causes & Effects." *LiveScience*, Purch, 2018. [amp.livescience.com/27692-deforestation.html](http://amp.livescience.com/27692-deforestation.html).

<sup>12</sup> Adam, David. "Satellite Images Show Papua New Guinea Deforestation at Critical Level." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 2 June 2008. [www.theguardian.com/environment/2008/jun/02/forests.conservation](http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2008/jun/02/forests.conservation).

<sup>13</sup> "Deforestation in New Guinea." *World Wildlife Foundation*, 2005. [http://www.panda.org/knowledge\\_hub/where\\_we\\_work/new\\_guinea\\_forests/problems\\_forests\\_new\\_guinea/deforestation\\_for\\_ests\\_new\\_guinea/#1](http://www.panda.org/knowledge_hub/where_we_work/new_guinea_forests/problems_forests_new_guinea/deforestation_for_ests_new_guinea/#1).

1998 and 2009 as a result of desertification, necessitating restoration in almost half the country's land.<sup>14</sup> The National Action Programme for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (NAP-UNCCD) states that desertification in The Gambia came about mainly as a result of "decreasing vegetation cover, brush fires, encroachment on the remaining forests, declining soil fertility, and over-exploitation of the rangeland."<sup>15</sup> These physical changes to the land result from a growing population and the related pressures that this puts on arable and non-arable land. With the economy relying largely on agriculture, redistributive trade and tourism, most Gambians rely heavily on crop production and livestock. Agriculture accounts for 30% of the GDP and 70% of the employment in the country. These numbers, in addition to the population density of 108 persons per square kilometer, illustrates the pressure of population growth on land management. Because of this, desertification also causes poverty and food insecurity in The Gambia. While people are the main catalysts for desertification, they are also the main victims of it. The misuse, or overuse, of land in Gambia has also contributed to the "salt water intrusion into the fresh water zone of the river system, salt water seepage into the upper aquifer of the fresh water system in the coastal areas, soil salinisation and erosion, decreasing fertility of the arable land, and finally, migration."<sup>16</sup> Because of limited arable land and the poverty and food insecurity that are associated with it, there is tension that can exacerbate conflict. The FAO has long suggested that food insecurity and conflict are connected and Gambia is no exception. While there is no direct link between the two, civil conflicts are always fueled largely by discontent with quality of life, which food security is very much a part of.<sup>17</sup>

## UNITED NATION EFFORTS

Due to the large scale of these issues, the United Nations has several offices with oversight on these matters, as well as targets included in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. The United

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<sup>14</sup> "The Gambia." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 2018. [www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/countries/africa/gambia/en/](http://www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/countries/africa/gambia/en/).

<sup>15</sup> "National Action Programme To Combat Desertification (NAP)." United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); The Government of the Gambia, 2000.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Stojetz, Wolfgang, and Charles Martin-Shields. "Food Security and Conflict." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 2018.



Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), FAO, and the United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD) all have agenda items, bills and programs dedicated to preventing deforestation. This is also true pertaining to desertification with the exclusion of UN-REDD and with the addition of the UNCCD. There are overarching goals that pertain to both these issues in the larger bodies of UNEP, UNDP and FAO, in addition to environmental rights being recognized as a human right by the Human Rights Council in 2012, and extended with resolution 37/8 and the appointment of Mr. David R. Boyd as the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment in 2018.<sup>18</sup>

In Papua New Guinea, UN-REDD has made progress in reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. REDD was first recognized in 2005 at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the request of Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica. This document, "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation in Developing Countries: Approaches to Stimulate Action," submitted by these two countries on behalf of the Coalition of Rainforest Nations, calls for the assistance of three subsidiary UN bodies, the UNEP, UNDP and the FAO, to assist in their fields of expertise to help nations such as Papua New Guinea reach their REDD+ goals. The assistance from these bodies under REDD has allowed for the strengthening of institutional capacities for sustainable forest management and monitoring. This has seen the establishment of the "Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system, PNG REDD+ and Forest Monitoring Web-Portal and Forest Reference Emission and Forest Reference Levels (FREL/FRL)," all through partnerships with the international community and organizations such as the European Union and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).<sup>19</sup> The combination of the REDD program and international assistance has allowed for the creation of the National Climate Change Policy, which creates economic incentive for the inclusion of REDD policy in sustainable forestry and land management. For the time being, REDD has slowed the course of deforestation by supporting change on an institutional level.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> "Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment." *OHCHR*, 2019. [www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/SREnvironment/Pages/SREnvironmentIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/SREnvironment/Pages/SREnvironmentIndex.aspx).

<sup>19</sup> Abe, Hitofumi. "Papua New Guinea's REDD+ Journey." *UN-REDD Programme*, 2018. [www.un-redd.org/single-post/2018/09/03/Papua-New-Guinea%E2%80%99s-REDD-journey](http://www.un-redd.org/single-post/2018/09/03/Papua-New-Guinea%E2%80%99s-REDD-journey).

<sup>20</sup> "Papua New Guinea." *The REDD Desk*, 2018. [theredddesk.org/countries/papua-new-guinea](http://theredddesk.org/countries/papua-new-guinea).

In response to the widespread concern about desertification, the United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification was established in 1994, the sole document to link both the environment and sustainable development. The Convention and the 197 nations who are party to it agreed on the creation of a new global roadmap to attain Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) along with the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework, which utilizes sustainable development to restore land productivity and lessen drought impacts on 1.8 billion vulnerable people.<sup>21</sup> In Gambia the UNCCD has contributed to the success seen in planning, preparing and executing the prevention of desertification. Together with the FAO, The Gambia has created agricultural initiatives that encourage the productions of non-timbre based forest products. These products include yields such as honey, edible fruits, and on non-timbre based forest products such as honey, and edible fruits, nuts and handicrafts. In The Gambia, the management of forests has also been included in its programs involving community forest management and the consolidation of community forestry, governmental and communal cooperation in state park forestry management, capacity development in forestry and nursery management and practices, as well as education about the effects of desertification.<sup>22</sup>

There have also been steps in the direction of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 15 over the last two decades. From 2000-2018 more of each key biodiversity area has been protected than before. This means that the percentage has risen by 39% for terrestrial areas, 42% for freshwater areas, and 36% for mountain areas. This has allowed for the total global percentage of protected land to rise to 15%. Measures such as these affectively aid in the protection of land from deforestation and desertification by creating a standard for effective and sustainable land management. In addition, 116 parties have ratified the Nagoya Protocol, which addresses the fair and equitable use of and access to genetic resources used to contribute to conservation and sustain biodiversity. This addresses target 15.6, which is just one of the steps that the UN and Member States have been taking to achieve SDG 15.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "UNCCD History." *UNCCD* 2018, [www.unccd.int/convention/about-convention/unccd-history](http://www.unccd.int/convention/about-convention/unccd-history).

<sup>22</sup> "The Gambia." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, 2018, [www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/countries/africa/gambia/en/](http://www.fao.org/in-action/action-against-desertification/countries/africa/gambia/en/).

<sup>23</sup> United Nations. "Forests, Desertification and Biodiversity - United Nations Sustainable Development." *Sustainable Development Goals*, United Nations, 2019, [www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/biodiversity/).

## THE FUTURE

The United Nations understands the challenges that lie ahead for countries as the world changes due to global warming. With frameworks of environmental protection for LDCs and other developing nations, and the Sustainable Development Goals set for 2030, combating climate change with development and preventative measures is a sure way to attempt to prevent and negate its possible ramifications. While countries like Papua New Guinea and The Gambia have seen adversity in terms of land degradation, they also serve as examples of how change can be implemented. It is the goal of the UN to provide a dignified life for all people; climate change, particularly deforestation and desertification, are direct threats to those principles. With interorganizational cooperation, community involvement and capacity building it is possible not only to prevent further land degradation but assist in the reversal of damage while promoting sustainable development. This will not only assist in the fight against climate change, but drastically improve the quality of life for all individuals.

Considerations for the future prevention of deforestation and desertification should include measures to prevent further degradation of land, including but not limited to the implementation of target goals outlined in SDG 15, the encouragement of community and indigenous forest management, and economic incentives for sustainable land management, specifically for agriculture. As we move forward, these stand as some of the most pressing matters in combatting land degradation, deforestation and desertification.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How do countries break free from the cycle of poverty, food insecurity and desertification?
2. How can we encourage sustainable forestry practices in countries whose economies rely on logging and agriculture?
3. How do we better implement the Sustainable Development Goals on a local scale?
4. What actions has your country taken to address these issues?
5. If you need assistance in addressing deforestation or desertification, what form should that assistance take?

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# **MEASURES TO ADDRESS ORGANIZED CRIME, INCLUDING ILLICIT FINANCIAL AND ARMS FLOWS, AND STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL SYSTEMS**

Whittier College

MUNFW 70<sup>th</sup> Session – Economic and Social Council

## **INTRODUCTION**

Sustainable Development Goal 16, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, is dedicated to "Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels."<sup>1</sup> SDG 16 has 12 targets, including "promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice" (16.3), "combat organized crime and illicit financial and arms flow" (16.4), "substantially reduce corruption and bribery" (16.5), and "strengthen national institutions to prevent violence and combat crime and terrorism" (16.A). These targets are the focus of this agenda item for the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Other targets under SDG 16, such as "protecting children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and violence" or "providing universal legal identity," while equally important, would come under the purview of other United Nations bodies. Those being discussed here in ECOSOC fall primarily under the mandate of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The UNODC, located in Vienna, Austria, was established by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2004 to integrate the work of the UN International Drug Control Programme (established in 1990) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme (established in 1991).<sup>2</sup> According to UNODC, "Traditional, territorial-based criminal groups have evolved or have been partially replaced by smaller and more flexible networks with branches across several jurisdictions. In the course of an investigation, victims, suspects, organized criminal groups and proceeds of crime may be located in many States. Moreover, organized crime affects all States, whether as countries of supply, transit or demand. As such, modern organized crime constitutes a global challenge that must be met with a concerted,

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<sup>1</sup> UN Report on SDG 16.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Handbook, 2018-19, published by New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2018), p. 276.

global response."<sup>3</sup> It states further that "Every nation is affected by the problems of serious and organized crime" that can impact "the daily lives of citizens, hamper economic growth, and hamper efforts made by governments to contain the consequences of crime."<sup>4</sup>

As with most of the other SDG targets, the General Assembly developed a set of indicators to use as benchmarks when determining how much progress was being made regarding each target. For instance, target 16.3 has two indicators (the proportion of victims who have reported their victimization and the proportion of detainees in the overall prison population who have not yet been sentenced. Target 16.4 includes indicators such as the "total value of inward and outward illicit financial flows" and "the proportion of seized, found or surrendered arms whose illicit origin or context has been traced or established by a competent authority." Indicators for 16.5 include data on the number of bribes involving public officials or business transactions and 16.A stresses the "existence of independent national human rights institutions in compliance with the Paris Principles."<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately, at the time of publication, data were lacking for many of these indicators. However, in terms of target 16.3 the Office did report that the "share of unsentenced detainees in the overall prison populations has remained largely constant at 30 per cent in recent years." And birth registration, which "plays a primary role in ensuring individual rights and access to justice and social services," while having reached nearly universal registration in some regions was at an average of just 73 per cent and below 50 per cent of children under the age of 5 in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Secretary-General's report noted that only "39 per cent of all countries had in place an institution that was fully compliant with the internationally agreed standard, seven countries more than was the case in 2015."<sup>7</sup> This suggests that delegates may wish to consider how to promote or improve the collection of relevant data in these areas.

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<sup>3</sup> UNODC, [www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro.html).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Secretary-General on the Sustainable Development Goals (2019).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

The primary document that outlines the United Nations Member States approach to these issues is the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, which was adopted as an Annex to Assembly resolution 55/25 on 15 November 2000. The concluding preambular paragraph provides the Convention's underlying philosophy and areas of concern:

*Strongly convinced* that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime will constitute an effective tool and the necessary legal framework for international cooperation in combating, inter alia, such criminal activities as money-laundering, corruption, illicit trafficking in endangered species of wild flora and fauna, offences against cultural heritage and the growing links between transnational organized crime and terrorist acts, . . .<sup>8</sup>

The Convention defines various terms and the scope of its application (Articles 2 and 3). It also notes in Article 4 that "States Parties shall carry out their obligations under this Convention in a manner consistent with the principles of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and that of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States." Article 6 criminalizes the "laundering of proceeds of crime," and Article 7 discusses "measures to combat money-laundering." Both Articles also describe the responsibilities of States Parties regarding laundering in terms of legislation and measures that they should follow. Subsequent articles discuss corruption, liability of legal persons, prosecution, confiscation of proceeds of crime, extradition of the accused, protection of witnesses, and various forms of international cooperation, including law enforcement cooperation and technical training.<sup>9</sup> Article 31 (Prevention) states that "States Parties shall endeavor to develop and evaluate national projects and to establish and promote best practices and policies aimed at the prevention of transnational organized crime" and outlines actions that States Parties should focus on.<sup>10</sup>

On 31 May 2001 the General Assembly, in resolution 55/255, adopted the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The opening preambular paragraph provides the justification for adopting the Protocol:

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<sup>8</sup> General Assembly Resolution 55/25, preambular paragraph 10.

<sup>9</sup> A/RES/55/25, Annex I, United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, Articles 8-30.

<sup>10</sup> A/RES/55/25, Annex I, United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, Article 31.



Aware of the urgent need to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, owing to the harmful effects of those activities on the security of each State, region and the world as a whole, endangering the well-being of peoples, their social and economic development and their right to live in peace, . . .[.]<sup>11</sup>

The Annex defines illicit manufacturing, illicit trafficking, and tracing among other terms and the scope of application (Articles 3 and 4). It goes on to discuss criminalization, confiscation, seizure and disposal, record-keeping, issues relating to firearms, cooperation and training and technical assistance (Articles 5-14).<sup>12\*</sup>

There are 190 States Parties to the Convention including all the permanent members of the Security Council. However, there are only 150 States Parties to the Protocol; China, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States are not parties to the Protocol.

## **STRENGTHENING JUDICIAL SYSTEMS**

Criminal behavior, whether carried out by organized gangs or corrupt governments, has become a more widespread phenomenon in recent years. In addition to possible loss of life, trafficking and exploitation of victims, in particular women and children, and economic losses, criminal behavior may inhibit donor countries from contributing assistance as that assistance does not always reach its intended targets. Furthermore, the private sector is often unwilling to invest in developing countries if they cannot be assured that their investments will be protected by a functioning legal system. For instance, regardless of where a State may stand on the issues surrounding Ukraine (as of mid-October 2019), it provides an excellent example of how corruption may interfere with a state's attempt to move forward with economic and political development.

In reaction to the general concerns noted above, the General Assembly has stressed the importance of strengthening judicial systems and promoting the rule of law. In its most recent resolution on the rule of law, it noted that the rule of law and development are "strongly

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<sup>11</sup> A/RES/55/255, Annex, preambular paragraph 1.

<sup>12</sup> Rather than spell out each of the relevant Articles in this paper, delegates are urged to consult both the Convention and its Protocol for definitions and recommendations to States Parties to the Convention.

interrelated and mutually reinforcing." It emphasized its strong commitment to support an effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice system, inclusive of all sectors of society.<sup>13</sup> The operative paragraphs call for mainstreaming a gender perspective, promoting educational programmes, eliminating all forms of discrimination, and welcome the efforts of the UNODC to, inter alia, improve data collection and analysis and provide technical assistance to Member States.<sup>14</sup>

A UNODC statement on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice noted that at the field level the Office has been developing programs related to crime prevention and criminal justice "based on the needs and objectives identified in each region/country."<sup>15</sup> It also notes that "crime prevention and criminal justice strategies must be gender-responsive and respect the rule of law, therefore incorporating human rights law and principles."<sup>16</sup> The Office follows the guidelines established by General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolutions.<sup>17</sup> In practice what the Office tries to do is provide assessment, advice and program support, develop tools and trainings for States, and update standards and norms.<sup>18</sup> Among the services UNODC provides are a Handbook on "Early Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Processes," a "Standards of Professional Responsibilities and Statement of the Essential Duties and Rights of Prosecutors" tool kit, "Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime," a "Resource guide on Strengthening Judicial Integrity and Capacity," and "Good Practices in the Protection of Witnesses in Criminal Proceedings Involving Organized Crime."<sup>19</sup>

In addition to General Assembly resolutions and UNODC activities, the Security Council now regularly includes efforts to improve judicial systems and police training as part of the mandates in peace-keeping operations, activities usually led by civilians and/or domestic police officials contributed by donor countries.

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<sup>13</sup> A/RES/73/185, preambular paragraphs 9, 12, and 14.

<sup>14</sup> A/RES/73/185, operative paragraphs 6, 8, 9, 15, and 16.

<sup>15</sup> UNODC statement: [unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/index.html?ref-menuside](http://unodc.org/unodc/en/justice-and-prison-reform/index.html?ref-menuside)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> UNODC statement: [unodc.org/unodc/en/urban-safety/criminal-justice-reform/html](http://unodc.org/unodc/en/urban-safety/criminal-justice-reform/html).

## MONEY LAUNDERING

One significant form of criminal behavior is the laundering of money. A UNODC statement in 2019 notes that "rapid developments in financial information, technology and communication allow money to move anywhere in the world with speed and ease. This makes the task of combating money-laundering more urgent than ever."<sup>20</sup> The Office estimates that 2-5 per cent of Global GDP or between US\$800 billion – US\$2 trillion is laundered in one year.<sup>21</sup> This money fuels corruption and organization crime and "can erode a nation's economy."<sup>22</sup> For instance, between 2008-2010 Africa "lost US \$63.4 billion to illicit flows, more than what it received in foreign direct investment."<sup>23</sup> UNODC suggests that the use of the U.S. dollar in transactions in black markets, greater financial deregulation, "the progress of the Euromarket, and the proliferation of financial secrecy havens" have contributed to difficulties in finding, freezing, and forfeiting criminally derived income.<sup>24</sup> In a statement on "Introduction to money-laundering," the Office notes that terrorists, while not concerned with disguising where money comes from (e.g., in some cases, the sale of oil in regions they control), "they are concerned with concealing its destination and the purpose for which it has been collected."<sup>25</sup> However, another problem stemming from illicit financial flows is the loss of tax revenue, estimated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) at \$100 billion U.S.<sup>26</sup>

UNODC's primary structure for dealing with money-laundering is its Law Enforcement, Organized Crime and Anti-Money-Laundering Unit (1997), which is responsible for carrying out its global program against money-laundering. The Unit's mandate was strengthened in 1998 by the Political Declaration and the measures for countering money-laundering adopted by the General Assembly at its twentieth special session, which broadened the scope of its mandate to cover all

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<sup>20</sup> UNODC statement on Money-Laundering and Globalization (2019). [unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/globalization.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/globalization.html)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> UNODC statement on "Introduction to money-laundering (2019). [unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/introduction.html?ref=menuaside](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/introduction.html?ref=menuaside)

<sup>23</sup> Radha Kulkarni [UNDP.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2018/taking-global-action-against-illicit-financial-flows.html](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2018/taking-global-action-against-illicit-financial-flows.html)

<sup>24</sup> UNODC statement on Money-Laundering and Globalization (2019). [unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/globalization.html](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/globalization.html)

<sup>25</sup> UNODC statement on "Introduction to money-laundering (2019). [unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/introduction.html?ref=menuaside](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/introduction.html?ref=menuaside)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

serious crime, not just drug related offenses."<sup>27</sup> The objective is to "strengthen the ability of Member States to implement measures against money-laundering and the financing of terrorism and to assist them in detecting, seizing and confiscating illicit proceeds. . . ."<sup>28</sup> The Unit has prepared on-line courses such as "Understanding Money Laundering," a 60-90 minute video that "covers common money laundering methods and actions that can be undertaken to fight money laundering."<sup>29</sup>

As the Office suggests, more sophisticated approaches to money-laundering require more sophisticated responses to a practice that can make it difficult for many countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. One approach suggested by Radha Kulkarni's UNDP blog would be for countries to commit to nationally-defined revenue targets, improve domestic financial transparency, and improve collection capabilities through modernized tax systems.<sup>30</sup> And MUN delegates can certainly consider other approaches that would try to prevent money-laundering at the source, before it is too late to stop illicit flows.

## **THE ILLICIT TRADE IN SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

As the nature of conflicts has changed from inter-state fighting to intra-state struggles and terrorist organizations or criminal gangs have become more active, the role of small arms and light weapons has increased and the need to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons has become even more important. The change in patterns of conflict has also had a significant impact on civilian casualties, which now outnumber those of the combatants themselves. The General Assembly has addressed this problem through numerous resolutions, yet the illicit trade, as well as the illegal sale and transfer of these weapons, continues unabated.

An article by Rebecca Peters in the UN Chronicle, "It's Time to Act Against Gun Violence," noted that given the high school massacres occurring in the United States, armed gangs in Brazil, and "systematic sexual violence" in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (DRC), a comprehensive

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<sup>27</sup> UNODC statement on "money-laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (2019) [unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/index.html?ref=menu-side](https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/money-laundering/index.html?ref=menu-side)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> [unodc.org/elearning/en/courses/course-catalogue.html#MLFC](https://www.unodc.org/elearning/en/courses/course-catalogue.html#MLFC), (course 9.1; 2019).

<sup>30</sup> Radha Kulkarni [UNDP.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2018/taking-global-action-against-illicit-financial-flows.html](https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2018/taking-global-action-against-illicit-financial-flows.html).



approach to the problem of gun violence was necessary.<sup>31</sup> Her article appeared in 2009. A decade later her comments are still, if not even more, valid. But this is not the result of inattention, but rather, perhaps, a lack of effective implementation of existing standards and insufficient political will.

The international community has adopted several documents to address this issue. These include the "Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects" (2001), the "International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons" (International Tracing Instrument – ITI, 2005), the "Arms Trade Treaty" (2012), and the "Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons" (the Kinshasa Convention, 2017).

The legally non-binding Programme of Action notes that "the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world . . . have a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences and pose a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels." It presents a series of actions Member States should take to address these problems, while "reaffirming the inherent right to individual or collective self-defence" and the right of each State to manufacture, import and retain small arms and light weapons for its self-defence and security needs."<sup>32</sup> The ITI, as its title suggests, provides guidelines for marking small arms and light weapons so that they can be traced from the time of production to their eventual use.<sup>33</sup> The Arms Trade Treaty, which entered into force in 2014, obligates Member States to monitor arms exports and ensure that such weapons are not used for human rights abuses, including terrorism, and calls upon States to establish standards for arms import and export. 105 States have ratified the Treaty (32 others have signed, but not ratified); China, Russia, and the United States have not ratified the Treaty.

The most recent Assembly resolution (A/RES/73/69), entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects," highlights a number of concerns in this area, but is doing so

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<sup>31</sup> Peters, Rebecca, "It's Time to Act Against Violence," UN Chronicle, Vol. XLVI, No. 1 & 2, January 2009.

<sup>32</sup> UN Document A/Conf.192/15, (poa-iss.org/PoA/ppoahtml.aspx.)

<sup>33</sup> Accessed through googling the title of the ITI.

implies that results in recent years have been disappointing. The resolution underlines "the need for States to enhance their efforts to build national capacity for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument." It also underlines the fact that the issue

requires concerted efforts at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and that their uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world has a wide range of humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels.<sup>34</sup>

The resolution also emphasizes the importance of international cooperation and assistance; identification of needs, priorities, and national plans; cross-border cooperation; and financial assistance; and welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish a multi-partner trust facility within the Peacebuilding Fund to provide support for States.<sup>35</sup>

In the general debate that led to the adoption of the resolution many States expressed their support for the various documents noted above, but Sudan noted that "responsibility for combating the proliferation of such weapons should be place on manufacturing States, not only the affected countries. Jamaica said that efforts must include "education initiatives that allow for greater public engagement in reducing, controlling and eliminating all categories of weapons." Malawi cited Small Arms Survey report that over 560,000 people had died of violence in 2016, while Ethiopia stressed that the illicit trafficking had been "fueling intra- and inter-State conflicts," attributing this to "their easy availability, relative inexpensiveness, technical simplicity and easy mobility." The Central African Republic noted the destruction caused by Boko Haram in central Africa and praised the Kinshasa Convention, which had already led many States to "establish national commissions to implement its

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<sup>34</sup> A/RES/73/69, operative paragraph 1.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, various paragraphs.

provisions." Speakers also called attention to the role of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and the need to follow through with these efforts in post-conflict situations.<sup>36</sup>

While these speakers expressed strong support for the various agreements and the resolution was adopted by consensus (without a vote), there are areas of disagreement. Some States object to the phrase "in all its aspects," which is included in the Programme of Action as being too broad and, perhaps, a threat to national sovereignty. Other concerns relate to the rights of States to manufacture, export or import, and maintain such weapons or the rights of their citizens to own such weapons. Delegates will have to weigh these concerns as they address this topic.

## **CONCLUSION**

It should be apparent that there is general agreement on the need to address the various problems included under this agenda item, but while each issue has been given considerable attention in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the international community has not resolved them and in some cases things have gotten worse. While delegates may wish to peruse the various documents to get a broader perspective on what they include, they should also think outside the box to develop realistic approaches that can help to implement the basic ideas that are included in these documents. Finally, while it is desirable to have one comprehensive, consensus resolution on these targets of Sustainable Development Goal 16, it may facilitate the work of delegates to have three separate resolutions or one resolution with three subsets to address the issues of improving justice systems, restricting the practice of money laundering, and reducing the illicit manufacture and trade in small arms and light weapons.

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<sup>36</sup> The statements are included in General Assembly First Committee, 73<sup>rd</sup> Session, 6<sup>th</sup> meeting (a.m.). [un.org/press/en/2018/gadis3601.doc.htm](http://un.org/press/en/2018/gadis3601.doc.htm).

## **QUESTION TO CONSIDER**

1. What programs has your country developed to improve your criminal justice system? Are you in a position to assist other country in this area? How?
2. Is money-laundering an issue in your country? What measures has your country taken to address this problem?
3. Is your country involved in the legal manufacture or distribution of small arms and/or light weapons? How to you ensure that the sale, export, or import of these weapons conforms with international standards?
4. Where does your State stand on some of the issues regarding the rights of countries or citizens to own, produce or distribute these kinds of weapons?
5. Is your country a Party to the various conventions or programs that have been adopted? Why or why not?
6. What forms of cooperation has your country engaged in with other States on these issues?
7. What additional steps can the international community take to address these issues?

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## **EXAMINING IMPLEMENTATION OF GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 17**

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During the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York during September 2015, seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were set to be accomplished by 2030. In order to achieve the SDGs in the given timeline, international cooperation is critical. Partnerships are key to the success of all nation-states. The 2018 report on the progress of the SDGs states that "Goal 17 seeks to strengthen global partnerships to achieve the Agenda's goals, bringing together national governments, the international community, civil society, the private sector and other actors."<sup>1</sup> Key areas examined to determine the success of SDG 17 are development assistance, high-speed broadband accessibility, market shares, and universal census polls. The coordination of each of these areas through contributions and cooperation from developed nations is crucial to the implementation of SDG 17.

### **SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION**

One of the crucial elements in coordinating state efforts is having developing nations working collaboratively with other developing nations. This idea is present in the South-South Cooperation, which was a term coined in 1978 during the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA) conference.<sup>2</sup> South-South Cooperation provides leverage for developing states in their negotiations and diplomatic communications with developed countries and allows them to share best practices with each other and make use of their comparative advantages. This cooperation provides a sense of unity among developing nations as they focus on common goals and mutual interests. For instance, South-South Cooperation has enabled developing countries to provide support for Cuba's continued battle against

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018/goal-17/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/intergovernmental-coordination/south-south-cooperation-2019.html>

Ebola in West Africa, Mexico's efforts to improve the quality of corn in Kenya, as well as the implementation of various action plans to reduce the hunger epidemic in Mesoamerican countries.

## **FINANCING DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

It is a priority of the United Nations to assist developing nations and vulnerable populations. One of the fundamental goals for SDG 17 is to increase official development assistance (ODA) and fulfill commitments that have been made by donor countries. The benchmark set for the ODA financial contributions is 0.7 percent of a nation's gross national income (GNI). In 2018 only five states met that goal: Denmark, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Despite increased contributions by some in 2017, ODA remained at 0.31 percent of GNI and net ODA in 2018 was down by 2.7 percent from 2017.<sup>3</sup> Donor fatigue and volatile financial markets are some of the reasons for this decline.

In its most recent resolution on South-South cooperation (A/RES/73/249), the General Assembly noted, among other points, the importance of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development and reaffirmed the need for a "strong political commitment to address the challenges of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity."<sup>4</sup> Whether this will result in an increase in ODA remains to be seen.

## **INTERNET ACCESSIBILITY**

The internet has become an essential component of modern living. While there have been advancements in the number of people who can access the internet, high-speed secure internet access is still unavailable to a large majority of the world. In 2016, "only 6 percent of the population [in developing countries] had access to high-speed fixed broadband Internet, compared to 24 per cent in

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<sup>3</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17>

<sup>4</sup> A/RES/73/249

the developed regions."<sup>5</sup> This directly impacts the ability to develop global connections and partnerships. Internet access is crucial to education, innovation and healthcare. Lack of access in the vast majority of the world creates a further divide between the haves and have nots. However, global improvements were made in 2018 by connecting different parts of the world with technology. Beginning in 2019, over half of the world's population had access to high-speed broadband internet networks.

Recently, there have been technological improvements to close the gap between developed and developing nations. The Technology Bank, agreed to in 2015 and implemented in June 2018, established a centralized "knowledge hub" for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that will allow for better global connections with scientific and technological information.<sup>6</sup> This is important because it utilizes the same approach as South-South Cooperation where countries with similar levels of development can assist one another. "The first stage of operations includes activities aimed at improving the access of scientists and researchers to publications, data, research and technical knowledge."<sup>7</sup> While the goal is to assist LDCs, once they no longer qualify for that status, they will still be allowed to access the Technology Bank for five years. This allows room for them to continue with projects and development as solidify their improved status.

## **TRADE**

Trade is another essential component of global partnerships. Tariffs limit the ability for open trade between nations. In 2017, "trade-weighted tariffs" were decreased worldwide by 2.2 percent. The highest tariffs from 2017 were placed on African regions. This caused increased trade tensions to rise among nations with large economies because doubt was cast about the capabilities of a multilateral trading system under WTO.<sup>8</sup>

The Istanbul Program of Action set a goal to have LDCs double their share of global exports by 2020. However, 2018 saw very slow growth where LDCs remained shareholders of only one

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<sup>5</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2018/goal-17/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.un.org/ldcportal/ldc-technology-bank-launches-in-turkey/>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> <https://undocs.org/E/2019/68>



percent of world merchandise exports. At this rate, it is projected that in order to meet the 2020 goal, LDCs will have to quadruple their share yearly.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS**

While government assistance and global partnerships between or among Member States are significant, there are other forms of partnership that will also have a major impact on achieving SDG 17. The private sector plays a key role. Private sector philanthropy allows for additional support of human rights and social justice movements.<sup>9</sup> While governments have specific agendas, private sector groups are able to set their own priorities and focus on assistance for a variety of causes. In order to mobilize resources for various projects, funding from the private sector must be utilized. Involving multiple stake-holders in large projects offers a greater opportunity for success. Signing on private sector organizations as supporters of economic, environmental, humanitarian, or social programs can ease financial constraints and create stronger backing for the Sustainable Development Goals.

## **PARTNERSHIPS WITH AND WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM**

Partnerships are not limited to those between States or between governments and the private sector. The United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP) "was established in 1998 to serve as the interface between the United Nations Foundation and the United Nations system." The fund provides support for a variety of projects sponsored by UN agencies, Governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The range of projects can be seen in the report of the Secretary-General on the "United Nations Office for Partnership" (A/73/222).<sup>10</sup> As of 2017 the fund had supported "641 projects, implemented by 48 United Nations entities in 128 countries."<sup>11</sup> Some examples include projects in the area of global health involving the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>

<sup>10</sup> A/73/222, p. 1, report of the Secretary-General on the "United Nations Office for Partnerships"; Ted Turner provided a significant amount of core funding, approximately \$0.45 billion out of a total of \$1.47 billion.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to address key global health priorities: WHO, UNICEF, the American Red Cross, and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to address measles and rubella; UNICEF and UNHCR's program "Nothing But Nets" to address malaria; and UNFPA, UN-Women, UNICEF, and UNHCR to promote issues "such as gender equality, maternal health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, the rights of adolescent girls, and gender-based violence."<sup>12</sup> In addition, there are multi-stakeholder alliances such as the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves or the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data.<sup>13</sup>

"The United Nations Democracy Fund was established by the Secretary-General [Kofi Annan] in July 2005 to support democratization around the world."<sup>14</sup> It has supported "nearly 750 projects in more than 130 countries."<sup>15</sup> In its latest round of funding projects addressed such topics as Youth engagement (16 %), Rule of law and human rights (18 %), Community activism (6 %), Strengthening interaction with Governments (23 %), Media and freedom of information (6 %), Empowerment of women (27 %), and Tools for knowledge (4 %).<sup>16</sup>

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also partner with UN agencies such as UNHCR, UNDP, and WFP. It is often NGOs who are working in the field given the limited resources and staffing of the agencies themselves. For instance, UNHCR works with well over 600 international, national, or local NGOs in over 100 countries. NGOs may provide medical assistance, psychological services, educational programs, food distribution assistance, and/or support with developing infrastructure.<sup>17</sup>

## **THE PARTNERSHIP FORUM AND UN HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM**

Each year the United Nations holds a Partnership Forum as a lead-in to ECOSOC's High-level Political Forum, which discusses progress regarding SDG 17 on an annual basis. At the meeting on 11 April 2019, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine spoke on behalf of the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-6.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 13; specific examples can be seen on pp. 14-16.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with UNHCR consultant, M. McBride.

Group of 77 and China.<sup>18</sup> The representative noted that the Group "recognizes the need for global partnership for sustainable development" and reiterates that a stronger commitment to partnership and cooperation is needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." Further, the Group emphasizes the need for "strengthening and promoting robust, effective and transparent multi-stakeholder partnerships, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development, respecting national policies and priorities." In addition, the Group welcomed progress in South-South cooperation, the importance of coordination in engaging with partners within the UN system, and reaffirmed "its readiness to work with all stakeholders to encourage effective partnerships, including public, public-private and with non-governmental organizations, philanthropic organizations, academia and civil society."<sup>19</sup>

## CONCLUSION

SDG 17 is important because it can create a sense of unity among the various stakeholders in their attempts to achieve the other SDGs. Partnerships between developed and developing countries in the form of ODA, fair trade agreements, or improved access to the internet; South-South cooperation; partnerships within the UN system and between UN agencies and other entities; and partnerships between Governments and NGOs, civil society and/or the private sector will be key in these efforts.

Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, there has been progress made on SDG 17 with regard to internet accessibility and trade-weighted tariffs. The Addis Ababa agreement on financing for development may address some funding needs. But donors need to be convinced to meet their ODA commitments; best practices and technological advances need to be shared; States need to do more to empower women, and Governments need to provide an enabling environment for developing partnerships where various stakeholders can contribute to efforts to fight poverty and

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<sup>18</sup> Palestine has been recognized as an observer State. While it cannot vote on issues, it may speak and participate in negotiations. Palestine was selected to be the primary spokesperson for the G77 and China during the 2019 session, so although not an official member of ECOSOC, Palestine may represent (speak on behalf of) the Group.

<sup>19</sup> All quotes and summaries come from the Statement by Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, 11 April 2019 at the ECOSOC Partnership Forum in New York; <https://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=190411>

address the other SDGs. A major challenge for delegates then is to come up with ideas to develop or strengthen, in the words of the G77, "robust, effective, and transparent multi-stakeholder partnerships" while respecting national sovereignty and promoting accountability so that we will "leave no one behind."

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What contributions does your nation state make to ODA? Does your country meet the 0.7 GNI goal?
2. Does your country have access to high-speed broadband internet? Are there restrictions on internet accessibility imposed by your government?
3. Does your country have access to the Technology Bank?
4. What is your country's stance on trade-weighted tariffs?
5. What type of partnerships have you participated in with other countries; the private sector; NGOs; etc.?

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