

Study Guide ECOSOC

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Topics:

- 1) Millennium Development goals post 2015
- 2) Investment of Sustainable Energy in Rural Regions of Africa or South East Asia



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Committee Overview and Mandate:

Chapter X of the *Charter of the United Nations* established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a founding body and one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). ECOSOC indirectly oversees 70% of UN resources through its oversight of 14 Specialized Agencies and thirteen functional and regional commissions. (1,2)

In 2013, ECOSOC underwent a series of reforms which attempted to expand its functions and powers as:

- “A leadership forum for policy dialogue and recommendations;
- The lead entity to address new and emerging challenges;
- A forum for the balanced integration of sustainable development;
- An accountability platform for universal commitments, monitoring and reporting on progress at all levels.”³

The Council is ***mandated to serve as a main body for policy dialogue; review and advise Member States and other UN entities on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics; as well as lead discussion on the implementation of the international development framework.***

In the last decade, the General Assembly, in resolutions 61/16 of 9 January 2007 and 68/1 of 13 December 2013 established to strengthen the working methods of the Council in two reforms. The latter recognized the leading role of the Council in “identifying emerging challenges and promoting reflection, debate and innovative thinking on development, as well as in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.” Therefore, with the

expansion of its role and responsibilities, the work of the Council remains critical, especially in preparing, monitoring and implementing the post-2015 development agenda and facilitating global discussions around the sustainable development goals.

(SDGs). (4,5,6,7)



Topic A: MILLENIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS POST 2015

Introduction:

“In today’s increasingly integrated world, the post-2015 development agenda must be conceived as a truly global agenda with shared responsibilities for all countries. The world has changed fundamentally since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. It is faced with new challenges and opportunities, many of which require collective action. The renewed global partnership for development underpinning the post-2015 development agenda will need to evolve with the changing development landscape to enable transformative changes. To do so effectively, it should build on the strengths of the current global partnership for development while going beyond its framework. Most importantly, it will have to be based on a strong commitment to engage in collective actions with a clear distribution of tasks between developed and developing countries.” (8)

History of the problem:

Important lessons can be learned from the experience with the present global partnership for development. MDG 8 has played a central role in galvanizing aid, increasing market access, providing debt relief, improving access to ICT and essential medicines and other forms of support. It also helped bring greater focus to the special needs of the most vulnerable countries. Yet, MDG 8 also had important gaps and systemic shortcomings, and there is a large discrepancy between its initial level of ambition and its implementation. In addition, MDG 8 perpetuated a “donor-recipient” type of relationship and did not pay sufficient attention to mobilizing development financing other than aid.

Current situation:

Aid remains an important source of development finance, and the international community should reaffirm and set clear timelines for achieving its official development assistance (ODA) targets, especially for countries with special needs. Part of these external resources should be geared towards increasing the capacity of developing countries to mobilize domestic resources, while also promoting good governance and combating capital flight. The renewed global partnership should also continue to foster dialogue on debt sustainability beyond its narrow focus on HIPCs and should further look to build a more equitable multilateral trade system, concluding the Doha Round but also addressing supply-side constraints in developing countries, including through improved access to new technologies and long-term investment.

Further, a renewed global partnership will have to strengthen global governance by addressing weaknesses in international arrangements for collective decision-making. Currently, there is an inconsistency between a rules-based multilateral trading system and an essentially unregulated financial system. Areas such as investment, technology and aid are managed at the national level or through ad hoc coordination, global public goods are under-provisioned, and developing countries are not adequately represented in multilateral institutions and other norm- and standard-setting bodies. Creating a more inclusive and equitable system of global governance would help strengthen coherence within the global partnership and would contribute to creating an international enabling environment for development.

Within the post-2015 framework, the global partnership will have to include explicit commitment from all countries across the goals and targets of the new development agenda, according to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In addition, there could

be explicit commitments towards a renewed global partnership for development, with a focus on creating an enabling environment for development, promoting the contribution of multiple partners, covering areas of common, and, in some cases, differentiated responsibilities. In addition to this broader “international enabling environment goal”, partnerships could be mainstreamed under each thematic goal. For accountability purposes, multi stakeholder partnerships could also be mainstreamed under each thematic goal, strengthening the links between goals and the means of achieving them. This structure would also better reflect the contributions of voluntary and purpose-specific partnerships, which could be coordinated and linked to the priority needs of developing countries in a more systematic manner.

Lastly, robust accountability mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels will be critical to increase the effectiveness of the renewed global partnership. By keeping track of progress, robust accountability will help ensure that commitments are being honoured by all sides. Member States have already taken a first step in strengthening global mutual accountability through the establishment of the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review and the biennial High-level Development Cooperation Forum, but strong political support from all countries will be needed to strengthen these measures.” (8)

Timeline of the events:

In order to understand the timeline in a more interactive manner kindly visit the following link:

<http://www.sustainabledevelopment2015.org/index.php/timeline>

Approach:

There are several ways to approach this topic. As per the study guide we can assist you with the following issues but we would highly encourage you to bring about issues other than these as well. The only thing to keep in mind regarding these topics is to understand the limitations of this UN body or more precisely its powers (mandate) regarding the approach.

The report presented on May 30th 2013 on the Post-2105 Development Agenda released “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development,” this essentially sets out a mission to alleviate acute poverty by 2030. The report stresses on the importance of Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to all. This essentially also puts stress on the role of individuals as well rather than just the supra-national entities.

Transformational shifts as indicated in the report:

1. **Leave No One Behind.** The dire need of the hour is to end extreme poverty in all its forms. It is imperative to understand that no individual based upon their differences such as color, creed, gender, disability of all levels, race or status should be left behind.

2. **Put Sustainable Development at the Core.** It is vital to understand the importance of social integration alongside social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability. It goes without saying that environmental change is real and it's happening at all levels. It is also posing unprecedented challenges.
3. **Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth.** Economic transformation that suits all can end extreme poverty by providing more livelihoods, innovation and technological advancements. The idea of equal opportunity is at the core of this principle; this can only be supported by keeping the youth bulge intact. Sustainable consumption and production is the new face of the world.
4. **Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All.** Freedom from conflict and violence is the most fundamental human entitlement, and the essential foundation for building peaceful and prosperous societies. At the same time, people the world over expect their governments to be honest, accountable, and responsive to their needs. We are calling for a fundamental shift – to recognize peace and good governance as a core element of well-being, not an optional extra.
5. **Forge a New Global Partnership.** A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin the post-2015 agenda. This new partnership should be based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. It should be centered on people, including those affected by poverty and exclusion, women, youth, the aged, disabled persons, and indigenous peoples. It should include civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, local and national governments, the scientific and academic community, businesses, and private philanthropy. (9)

Questions a Resolution Should Answer:

1. What hinders the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals?
2. How to localize this agenda of eradicating poverty?
3. How to increase capacities of existing institutions in order to bring about a transformational change and achieve goals
4. Participatory monitoring and accountability through checks and balances.
5. How culture can be used to address this issue? How can issues like gender inequality, environment, education, awareness and empowerment can be addressed using culture as a main theme?
6. The role of civil society in mobilizing the society and work with the government institutions to bring about the transformational changes
7. How to promote cultures of efficient utilization of resources, accountability, good governance can play a major role in achieving the agenda of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030.

Further readings:

1. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1674927815000489>
2. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/povertyeradication>
3. <http://enb.iisd.org/crs/poverty/sdvol46num1.html>

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1. UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.
2. Public Broadcasting System, *Kofi Annan Center of the Storm: Who Does What?*
3. UN ECOSOC, *The New ECOSOC – Overview of Functions and Working Methods*, 2014.
4. UN ECOSOC, *About ECOSOC*.
5. Ibid.
6. UN ECOSOC, *Further Review of the Implementation of Resolution 61/16 of the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council*.
7. UN ECOSOC, *Millennium Development Goals and post-2014 Development Agenda*.
8. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/report2.shtml
9. http://www.un.org/sg/management/pdf/HLP_P2015_Report.pdf

Topic Area B: INVESTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE ENERGY IN RURAL REGIONS OF AFRICA OR SOUTH EAST ASIA

Introduction:

With the threat of climate change, unsustainable patterns of energy production gravely affect the planet and human health as well. Sustainable energy is an important mechanism for rural upliftment, economic growth, social progress and poverty reduction especially in particular regions of Africa and Asia. ECOSOC thereby proposes an energy sector market reformation through a range of interventions such as on policy, finance and capacity development. By encouraging investments which help in sustainable energy production and services, UN is helping to make this approach more practical and feasible. Sustainable Energy for All is an important initiative. This initiative is important not only because it's limited to developing countries but also for the fact that a new culture of sustainable energy is something of dire need at the moment.

Renewable energy concept has generally been perceived as a costly luxury only affordable by developed countries. This concept has been in loop for a long time and hence regions such as Africa and South Asian countries have generally not been able to adopt it. On the contrary, it has been seen that the investments in non-renewable energy resources is taking place gradually with \$156 billion invested, mainly in China, India, and Pakistan. (1)

Developing nations in Africa are new grounds for renewable energy resources as they have sustainability patterns. These nations are working on the following things:

1. small-scale solar,
2. wind, and

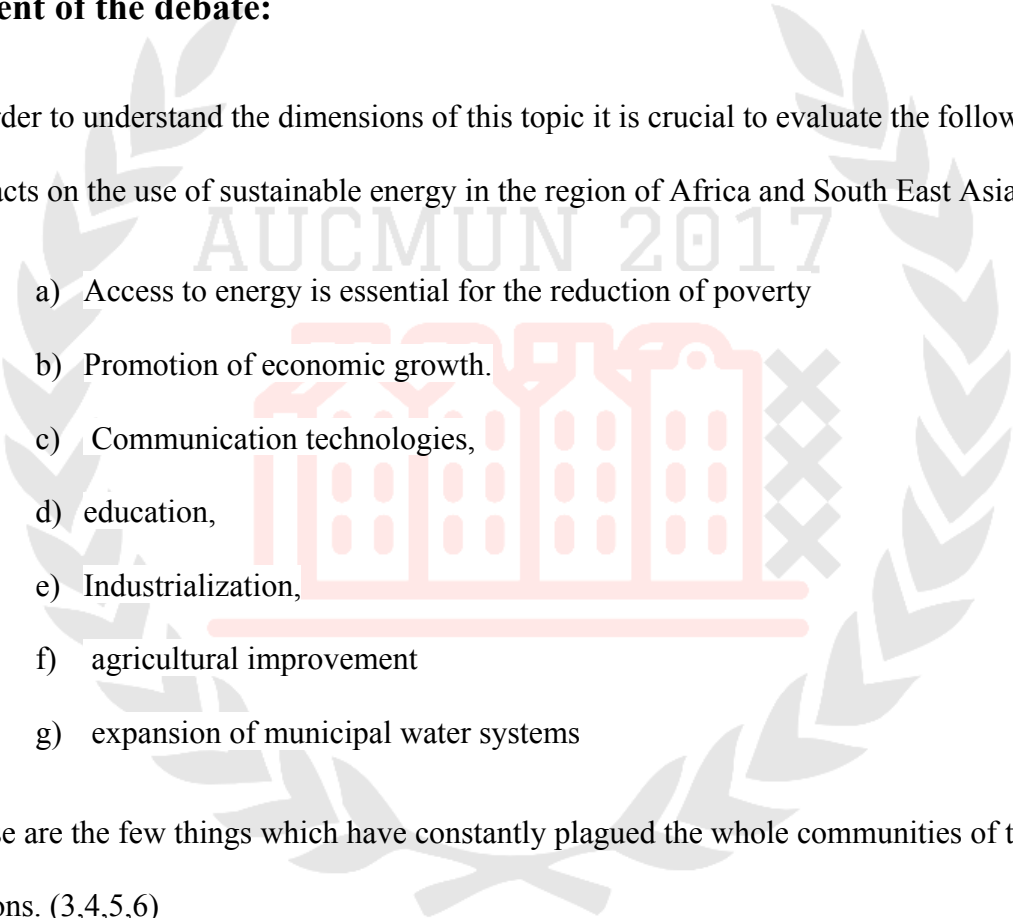
3. geothermal devices

The need of these kinds of energy input is vital because of the fact that the cost of electricity from large-scale power plants is not feasible because of the excessive cost of transporting it. Hence, it is imperative that these energy levels are enhanced so as to promote more growth.

(2)

Extent of the debate:

In order to understand the dimensions of this topic it is crucial to evaluate the following impacts on the use of sustainable energy in the region of Africa and South East Asia:

- 
- a) Access to energy is essential for the reduction of poverty
 - b) Promotion of economic growth.
 - c) Communication technologies,
 - d) education,
 - e) Industrialization,
 - f) agricultural improvement
 - g) expansion of municipal water systems

These are the few things which have constantly plagued the whole communities of these regions. (3,4,5,6)

Financing:

Sustainable energy requires the following things:

- 1) Photo-voltaic panels,

- 2) wind turbines deep cycle batteries,
- 3) meters,
- 4) sockets cables
- 5) materials cost,
- 6) opportunity cost,
- 7) labor cost and

This is not something they can easily manage considering the fact that less than US\$1 per day is their income. Hence they mostly rely on the fossil fuels which are easily available throughout their territories.

Many rural electrification projects in the past use government subsidies to finance the implementation of rural development programs. It is difficult for rural electrification projects to be accomplished by for profit companies; in economically impoverished areas these programs must be run at a loss for reasons of practicality. Hence, the debate of the whole topic revolves around the fact that how the financing can be achieved for these countries which is not only continuous but also is demanded to be utilized efficiently as to bring about results. (8)

Contributions:

1) Emission trading credits:

“Emissions trading, as set out in Article 17 of the Kyoto Protocol, allows countries that have emission units to spare - emissions permitted them but not "used" - to sell this excess capacity to countries that are over their targets.

Thus, a new commodity was created in the form of emission reductions or removals.

Since carbon dioxide is the principal greenhouse gas, people speak simply of trading in carbon. Carbon is now tracked and traded like any other commodity. This is known as the carbon market.

2) Other trading units in carbon markets:

More than actual emissions units can be traded and sold under the Kyoto Protocol's emissions trading scheme. The other units which may be transferred under the scheme, each equal to one tonne of CO₂, may be in the form of:

- A removal unit (**RMU**) on the basis of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities such as reforestation
- An emission reduction unit (**ERU**) generated by a joint implementation project
- A certified emission reduction (**CER**) generated from a clean development mechanism project activity” (9)

European countries that consume oil refined from African countries have the opportunity to subsidize the costs of individual level, village level, or community level alternative energy systems through emissions trading credits.

It has been proposed that for every unit of African origin carbon consumed by the European market, a predetermined amount green credits or carbon credits would be yielded. The European partners could then either supply parts, components, or systems directly, an equivalent amount of investment capital, or lend credits to finance the distribution of renewable energy services, knowledge or equipment. (10,11)

“UNEP has developed a loan program to stimulate renewable energy market forces with attractive return rates, buffer initial deployment costs and entice consumers to consider and purchase renewable technology. After a successful solar loan program sponsored by UNEP that helped 100,000 people finance solar power systems in developing countries like India, UNEP started similar schemes in other parts of developing world like Africa ,Tunisia, Morocco, Kenya projects are already functional and many projects in other African nations are in the pipeline. In Africa, UNEP assistance to Ghana, Kenya and Namibia has resulted in the adoption of draft National Climate Awareness Plans, publications in local languages, radio program and seminars. The Rural Energy Enterprise Development (REED) initiative is another flagship UNEP effort focused on enterprise development and seed financing for clean energy entrepreneurs in developing countries of West and Southern Africa.” (12)

“The Government of South Africa has set up the South African Renewables Initiative (SARi) to develop a financing arrangement that would enable a critical mass of renewables to be developed

in South Africa, through a combination of international loans and grants, as well as domestic funding. This has been a highly successful program now known as the REIPPP (Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Program) with four rounds of allocations already completed. In Round 1, 19 projects were allocated, in Round 2, 28 projects were allocated, in Round 3, 17 projects were allocated and in Round 4, 26 projects were allocated. Over 6100MW has been allocated with a total of R194 billion (US\$16 billion) being invested in this program. It is important to note that this investment figure represents full funding from private entities and banks - there are no government subsidies for this program.” (13)

Questions a resolution must answer:

- 1) Defining sustainable energy for developing countries
- 2) How can access to sustainable energy be made
- 3) What are the main hurdles faced by developing nations in promoting the culture of sustainable energy
- 4) Can Africa and South Asian countries do something about promotion of this culture (cost benefit analysis)
- 5) What kind of policy reformation is needed in order to achieve desired goals (role of UNEP, UNDP)
- 6) How can energy research be promoted in these regions
- 7) What measures can ECOSOC take on policy levels and economic transformation?

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1. FS-UNEP Collaborating Centre, Global trends in renewable energy investment
2. The Human Development Report 2001, United Nations Development Programme
3. Cassedy, Edward S. Prospects for sustainable Energy: A Critical Assessment. New York Cambridge UP, 2000.
4. African Wind Energy Association Summary
5. Malin P.E (2001) Establishment of Geothermal Resource Center to Accelerate the Development of Eastern Africa
6. Energy in Africa, Chapter 7, United States Energy Information Administration
7. Africa Regional Findings (2001) Rural Electrification: Lessons Learned, *World Bank*
8. http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/emissions_trading/items/2731.php
9. Britain Urges Global Carbon Trading To Spur Eco-Healthy Growth, Aziakou G. (2006)
10. Sustainable Energy Finance Activity Overview, UNEP (2006)
11. https://www.photon.info/en/news/news_02-01_af_kenia_pv_loans.htm
12. Frequently Asked Questions on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Body of Knowledge on Infrastructure Regulation (South African Renewables Initiative www.sari.org.za)