

# CHAPTER V.

## THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

AMUN's Economic and Social Council will consider four topics on its agenda. Representatives can choose to explore these topics in a number of forms: through resolutions, in less formal working groups or commissions, or through the creation of treaty or convention documents.

### STATE MEMBERS

Armenia	Cuba	Jamaica	Russian Federation
Australia	Ecuador	Japan	Saudi Arabia
Azerbaijan	El Salvador	Kenya	Senegal
Bangladesh	Finland	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Sweden
Belgium	France	Malaysia	Tunisia
Belize	Germany	Mauritius	Turkey
Benin	Ghana	Mozambique	Ukraine
Bhutan	Greece	Namibia	United Arab Emirates
Burundi	Guatemala	Nicaragua	United Kingdom
Canada	Hungary	Nigeria	United Republic of Tanzania
Chile	India	Panama	United States
China	Indonesia	Poland	Zimbabwe
Colombia	Ireland	Qatar	
Congo	Italy	Republic of Korea	

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

#### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: PROMOTING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FOR POVERTY ERADICATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

For the year 2003, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) chose as its high-level segment the issue of "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development." Rural development is crucial to poverty eradication and sustainable development for a number of reasons, including such issues as food security, agricultural sector growth, and the ability to sustain development with large numbers of migrants moving away from their primary source of food and into cities.

Currently more than 60% of the world's population in developing countries live and work in rural areas. Since the 1960s the trend of migration to urban centers has increased, and created a massive explosion in the growth of slums because of the cities' inability to deal with the population influx. The combination of former agricultural producers (often at a subsistence level) migrating to cities has caused a severe strain on many of the least developed countries. While rural agriculture is necessary to feed those in cities, there is not enough labor in many areas to produce the needed food. Additionally, city dwellers often receive higher levels of government benefits than rural citizens, mainly due to their proximity to those in power. And more importantly for poverty eradication and sustainable development, many of the least developed countries still rely on agricultural products as their primary exports; thus a lack of rural development can easily lead to a lack of development for the entire country.

The extreme importance of rural development is recognized by the UN in many forums, with internationally accepted development goals in agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals, and the Brussels Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. The UN system has taken a coordinated approach to achieving these goals, both within UN bodies and including the entire development community. Inside the UN, work on rural development is coordinated by

ECOSOC, but is primarily accomplished through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), and the World Food Programme (WFP). The primary goal of the Brussels Programme, which provides direction for much of this work, is to coordinate the efforts of all development agencies in a mutually reinforcing manner. Thus the various UN bodies also work closely with the World Bank, the IMF, the regional development banks, national governments and civil society groups within affected countries, among others.

In May of 2001, the international community met in Brussels, Belgium for the third time to discuss the plight of least developed countries and to create the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. The facts presented at this meeting were staggering, and it was clearly recognized that the goals of previous programs, such as those set forth in the Paris Declaration, were not met. Not only were the least developed countries (LDCs) still impoverished, but it also became clear that the positive effects of globalization were bypassing the LDCs, thus leading to their further marginalization in the international community. To help combat this, the Brussels Declaration laid out an array of objectives that would focus on six priorities. These priorities range from the very broad, the significant reduction of poverty, to very specific measures such as removing supply-side constraints, enhancing productive capacity, and promoting the expansion of domestic markets to accelerate growth, income and employment generation. This built on the Millennium Goals, which are still the guiding principles for much of the work in poverty eradication and development. Other conferences have stated very similar and complimentary goals, including the World Food Summit (1996), the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries (2001), the International Conference on Financing for Development (2002), the World Food Summit +5 (2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002). All of these forums have recognized the need to create an environment in which it is possible to severely reduce, if not eliminate rural poverty and promote sustainable development.

Governments have also been involved directly in helping to al-



leviate this problem, with the developing countries accepting their share of responsibility on this issue. All members of the African Union pledged at a recent AU conference to set aside ten percent of their national budgets to increase agricultural production, a significant internal step toward achieving the goal. Also, at the Evian Summit of the G8 (2003), all members recognized the role of agriculture and rural development, and agreed to reverse the recent declines in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in an attempt to help this issue.

At the core of the Brussels Programme is the need to thoroughly integrate all international development efforts, thus reducing waste and duplicative programs or funding, while maximizing the impact of the programmes. The integration also takes a broad based approach to what is included in the category of “rural development.” This is now taken to include such important areas as food security, regional cooperation, south-south cooperation, poverty, urban growth and overall population growth. Given the importance of women in development, and especially in rural development, gender issues are also a key focus of these programmes. Programmes are thus integrated across economic, social and environmental areas.

While the problems have now been recognized in a much more realistic fashion than in the past, solving those problems will still require a great deal of work and time. First, to accomplish the goals set out in the Brussels Declaration the international community needs to find ways to increase the level of funding to development programs. With recent shrinkages in ODA, and with some countries hesitant to commit funds to some international programmes, financing is a key issue. Further, the governments of developing countries must take a lead role in ensuring that their countries are prepared to make the best use of the aid that is available, and to waste as little as possible. And finally, the UN system must work hard to constantly coordinate efforts across the many different agencies that do development work.

Questions to consider from your government’s perspective on this issue include:

- What can ECOSOC do to better coordinate the work of the various agencies involved in implementing the Brussels Plan of Action?
- What steps can your country take, whether industrialized or developing, to better facilitate the solution to rural development problems?
- How can the programs be best funded at the needed levels?

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- “Ministers Discuss Rural Poverty at IFAD Meeting.” *UN Wire*, 8 May 2002.
- “Countries Call for Help to Rural Poor.” *UN Wire*, 17 May 2002.
- “UNDP Urges Reforms to Curb Rural Poverty.” *UN Wire*, 10 Feb 2002.
- “Rural Development Tops ECOSOC Agenda.” *UN Wire*, 30 Jun 2003.
- “Annan Calls for Action on Rural Development.” *UN Wire*, 1 Jul 2003.
- Poudel, Keshab. “Cost of Disaster.” *Spotlight Nepal*, Volume 24, Number 4.

*UN Documents:*  
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A/CONF.191/11

- E/2003/51  
E/ECA/CM.21/15  
LDC-II/2003/L.1/Rev.1  
E/2004/54  
E/2004/58  
E/2004/65  
Speech of Anna Tibaijuka at the 2003 ECOSOC High-Level Segment. 1 Jul 2003.  
“Summary of the Ministerial Roundtable on the topic of ‘Role of agriculture and rural development in the eradication of hunger and poverty’” 30 Apr 2003.  
Statement By Mr. Kashiram Rana, Minister Of Rural Development At The Substantive Session 2003 Of The Economic And Social Council, High Level Segment: Promoting An Integrated Approach To Rural Development In Developing Countries For Poverty Eradication And Sustainable Development In Geneva On 1 Jul 2003.  
Summary Report of the NGO FORUM to the ECOSOC High-Level Segment on “Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development”  
Issues paper ECOSOC Brainstorming Dialogue Sessions organized in preparation for the 2003 High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council. 24 Mar 2003.  
Summary of key recommendations from the NGO Forum held on 27 Jun 2003, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

### *Additional Web Resources:*

- [www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/hl2003/](http://www.un.org/esa/coordination/ecosoc/hl2003/) -- Website of the ECOSOC 2003 High-Level Segment Commission  
[www.undp.org/](http://www.undp.org/) -- United Nations Development Programme  
[www.fao.org/](http://www.fao.org/) -- Food and Agriculture Organization  
[www.wfp.org/](http://www.wfp.org/) -- United Nations World Food Programme  
[www.ifad.org/](http://www.ifad.org/) -- International Fund for Agricultural Development

### ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Faced with what many view as a population crisis of Malthusian proportions, the global community must recognize the relationship between population and development and must work to solve the issues surrounding them. If current growth patterns continue, the global population, just over six billion in 2004, could reach between nine and twelve billion by 2050. Worldwide, the growth rate hovers around 1.4%, and most agree it is declining. Problematically, in countries with the scarcest resources, the most demographic pressure, and the highest poverty rates, the rate hovers between 2.5 and 4% -- giving many least developed nations a doubling time (the number of years for a current population to double) of only 17-25 years. Low-income countries constitute as much as 95% of global population growth, while several developed nations actually have negative growth rates. High birth rates are inextricably associated with poverty, poor sanitation, and a low level of education. These things are also associated with high infant and maternal mortality rates as well as lowered life expectancy.

The Commission on Population and Development (CPD) was created in 1946, and charged with creating and implementing programs regarding population and development. Since then, the CPD has been a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, and makes an annual report to them. There are three main areas of discussion within ECOSOC about population and development, and they

are also connected with other ECOSOC programs and initiatives. The three main issues are: access to clean water and sanitation facilities, sexual and reproductive health, and education. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt in 1994 formulated a Program of Action, and since then, ECOSOC, the CPD, and other bodies have been working to implement it.

At the UN Millennium Summit in 2000, the international community declared a goal to halve the proportion of people without access to clean water by 2015. In 2004, approximately 1.1 billion people were without such resources (about 18% of the global population), though in some nations the figure is as high as 45%. Recently, however, ECOSOC has expressed concerns that the international community is in serious danger of not meeting this goal unless things improve drastically. Additionally, even if the global goal was met by 2015, it would still result in a significant increase in the number of people without access to clean water.

In the realm of sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases continue to remain a primary focus. The impact of HIV/AIDS on global population trends is just now beginning to make itself known. The epidemic is, for the most part, causing a population crash in the middle (working) age bracket, thus increasing economic, social, and cultural pressures on an increasingly polarized (in terms of age) population.

The issue of education is also a significant one. Studies have shown that an increase in the average level of education in a society is correlated to a decline in birthrates. Regarding sexual and reproductive health and education, gender is at the forefront of the debates in the UN as are issues of family planning. In the future, ECOSOC members can be expected to address each of these areas, implementing both regional and global action.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this topic include:

- What are the basic demographic realities for your country and region (birth rates, death rates, population distribution, annual growth rate, population density, etc.)?
- What is your country's official position on family planning initiatives and the reproductive rights of women (i.e. birth control, abortion, pre-natal care, one-child policies, etc.)?
- What solutions does your country support for international population and development problems?
- If you represent a developing country, what are the obstacles to providing your population with access to clean water and sanitation facilities? If you represent an industrialized nation, what efforts does your country support to aid developing countries in this situation?
- To what extent does your country achieve gender parity in education? How can this be improved worldwide?

## Bibliography:

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## UN Documents:

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- Commission on Population and Development, Report on the thirty-fifth session, 2002 – [www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/cn9/2002/english/ecn92002-6e.pdf](http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/cn9/2002/english/ecn92002-6e.pdf)
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- Commission on Population and Development, Report on the thirty-third session, 2000 – [www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/docs/2000/e2000-25.pdf](http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/docs/2000/e2000-25.pdf)
- Progress made in providing safe water supply and sanitation for all during the 1990s -- [www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/cn17/2000/ecn172000-13.htm](http://www.un.org/documents/ecosoc/cn17/2000/ecn172000-13.htm)

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.iisd.ca/cairo.html](http://www.iisd.ca/cairo.html) – Cairo Conference Homepage
- [www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/population/unpop.htm) -- CPD Homepage
- [www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/index.html](http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/index.html) -- World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2004
- [unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ww2000/index.htm](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ww2000/index.htm) – Demographic statistics, 2000
- [www.hsph.harvard.edu/hcpds/research.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hcpds/research.html) – Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies

## SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: NARCOTIC DRUGS

The use, abuse, and trade of controlled substances, particularly narcotic drugs has been an ongoing discussion since the beginning of the United Nations. Narcotics have not only been identified as a great health hazard, but also as a source of crime, including the funding of terrorist activities, and causes instabilities in development, economies, and democracy. The UN has continually strived to reduce the abuse and trade of these substances through constantly monitoring and assisting nations in dealing with the continual threat of narcotic drugs and other controlled substances.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) has been responsible for analyzing the world drug situation and developing proposals to control and combat the world drug problem. Established in 1946, the Commission is the central policy-making body for dealing with drug related matters. In 1991, the CND became responsible for governing the newly formed the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The CND gives policy guidance and monitors the UNDCP and works with the UNDCP to establish the budget. This budget finances the Programme's operational activities and accounts for over ninety percent of the resources available to the UN for drug control. The UNDCP is administered as part of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

During the twentieth special session on the world drug problem by the General Assembly, in 1998, the GA requested that Member States report biennially to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on their progress in meeting the goals agreed upon during the special session (the Action Plan). The Commission is responsible for analyzing these reports and prepares a consolidated report. The first and second of these reports were released in 2001 and 2003.

The Economic and Social Council and the GA have continually addressed the world drug program throughout the years. The resulting resolutions and reports have emphasized the importance of demand and supply reduction to reduce illicit drug trading. To reduce drug demand, the UN bodies have encouraged research, education, and increased public awareness, especially for youth,



who are at a higher risk. The importance of drug rehabilitation and treatment, intervention programs, and social reintegration programs to help those in need has also been stressed. These are further outlined in the Declaration on Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction, also adopted during the twentieth special session of the GA.

These UN bodies have also addressed reducing the illicit trade in narcotics and other controlled substances. They have stressed the importance of local law enforcement initiatives to the countering of such trade, and money laundering associated with this trade. The UN has also encouraged Member States to provide assistance and technical support to the authorities of States affected by illicit trade. The use of voluntary funds, through the UNDCP, to affected states for the purpose of education and training and building of resources for combating the illicit trading has also been suggested. For some States affected by illicit trade, narcotics and other controlled substances are an important economic resource. The need to increase demand for alternative products has also been highlighted as a way to reduce the need for the supply of controlled substances.

Varying results have been seen over the past decade in the area of illicit narcotic and drug abuse. For example, heroin abuse has decreased in West Europe. However, increases have been seen in East Europe, Central Asia, and the Russian Federation, fueled mostly by the rapid growth of opium in Afghanistan. On a positive note, the market potential is not yet as great as in West Europe, but the potential for one is large. Abuse of cocaine has shown some improvement. Colombia is the biggest producer of cocaine, but has shown a decrease in production by 37% over two years. Other suppliers such as Peru and Bolivia, have also shown reductions in supply and demand. However, there are signs showing an increase in the markets in South America and Europe.

The changing of drug trends is an indication that adjustments always need to be made to counter new threats. The monitoring and control of drug precursors has gained importance as a close link to the abuse of drugs derived from the precursors. The internet has been identified as a source for illicit drug trade, and the CND has recommended that Member States track and dismantle these sites and implement laws governing such trades. Member States must also combat the popular trend to legalize the use of controlled substances for non-medical purposes. There are also a number of Member States who are not party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and the two following conventions on psychotropic substances and illicit traffic of controlled substances.

Questions to consider from your country's perspective on this issue include:

- How has your nation or region been impacted by abuse and trade in narcotics?
- What aspects of the drug control solutions are most important to your nation or region: reduction in supply and demand, education, human and other resources, etc?
- To what extent can the CND, UNODC, and other organizations dictate and implement global policies without violating national sovereignty?

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- “Signs Of Progress” Reported At U.N. Commission Meeting.” *UN Wire*, 9 Apr 2003.
- “U.N. Panel Ends Session, Maintains Interdiction Approach; More.” *UN Wire*, 18 Apr 2003.
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## UN Documents:

- Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988
- Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971
- Global Illicit Drug Trends 2003 - Biennial report released by the UNODC
- Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961
- A/RES/58/141 - International cooperation against the world drug problem
- A/RES/S-20/2 - The Political Declaration adopted at the 20th Special Session
- A/RES/S-20/3 - Declaration on Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction
- E/2003/INF/2/Add.4 - Resolutions and decisions adopted by ECOSOC in the substantive session of 2003
- PR SOC/NAR/896 - March 19 press release on the 47th session of the CND

## Additional Web Resources:

- [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)
- [www.unodc.org/unodc/cnd.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/cnd.html) -- CND webpage
- [www.incb.org](http://www.incb.org)
- [www.un.org/issues/docs/d-crime.asp](http://www.un.org/issues/docs/d-crime.asp)

## REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the three main topics on ECOSOC's agenda, the Council will also receive a report on the final day from the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). As a functional commission established by ECOSOC, the CSD is required to make annual reports on its activities to the members of ECOSOC. The CSD will present its report only on specified topics. While these reports are generally accepted pro forma, ECOSOC may also choose to take some action on the recommendations contained in the report. The CSD may also present their recommendations in resolution format, allowing ECOSOC the chance to review and formally pass the CSD's proposals.

To facilitate this process, the final session of ECOSOC and CSD will culminate in a joint session at which the CSD will present its recommendations to ECOSOC. Following this presentation, it will be up to the joint session to take further action. Please be aware that, as a functional commission of ECOSOC, the CSD has been given significant responsibilities to study, review, debate and decide on recommended actions within specific topical areas that ECOSOC felt should be dealt with in greater detail than could be addressed by the main body. It is recommended that all Representatives assigned to ECOSOC also review the background section on the CSD (Chapter VII), and Representatives may choose to do some additional research into these topics.

