

# 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

Albania	Costa Rica	Jamaica	Poland
Armenia	Cuba	Japan	Republic of Korea
Australia	Dem. Republic of the Congo	Kenya	Russian Federation
Azerbaijan	Denmark	Lithuania	Saudi Arabia
Bangladesh	Ecuador	Malaysia	Senegal
Belgium	France	Mauritius	South Africa
Belize	Germany	Mexico	Thailand
Benin	Greece	Mozambique	Tunisia
Brazil	Guinea	Namibia	Turkey
Canada	Iceland	Nicaragua	United Arab Emirates
Chad	India	Nigeria	United Kingdom
China	Indonesia	Pakistan	United Republic of Tanzania
Colombia	Ireland	Panama	United States of America
Congo	Italy		

### BACKGROUND RESEARCH

#### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: ACHIEVING THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INCLUDING THOSE CONTAINED IN THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION AS WELL AS IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS: PROGRESS MADE, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Millennium Summit was the culmination of a number of international conferences and summits held throughout the 1990s that addressed development issues. At the Millennium Summit, leaders laid the framework for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were adopted by the General Assembly in September 2000. All 191 member nations pledged to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve "Universal Primary Education," promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop a global partnership for development. Specific target figures and dates were set for these goals. The MDGs, however, are only a part of a broader international development agenda that also addresses middle income countries and longer-term goals. The 2005 ECOSOC high-level segment is an attempt to discuss the integration of the MDGs into the international development framework and will provide input to the General Assembly's 2005 high-level review of the progress made on the MDGs.

On 16 and 17 March 2005, ECOSOC held an informal preparatory meeting for the high-level segment. Roundtables were held on structural reform, finance and trade liberalization, monetary policies, social policies, and the relationship between economic and human development. They reinforced the notion that bold new thinking is needed to achieve gender equality, particularly in conflict and post-conflict zones. Issues highlighted included the ability of economic systems to offer opportunities for adequate income generation, the ability of social systems to facilitate the accumulation of capabilities, and the capacity for economic systems to provide adequate resources.

The Secretary-General released a report in May 2005 in preparation for both the high-level segment of ECOSOC and the September high-level review by the General Assembly. The report highlighted that the MDGs and the various international conferences are highly interlinked and should be approached as complements to one another. The Secretary-General emphasized nine areas of development and their associated goals as a tool to develop an integrated policy framework. Among the recommendations included in the report, he suggested that rural development, universal primary education, essential medicines, gender mainstreaming, employment, and groups with special needs should all be made priorities in the upcoming years in order to realize the MDGs.

Currently, much of the work on international development is fragmented, with numerous conferences and agendas that are not linked in any coherent form. One of the aims of the ECOSOC high-level review is to coordinate policy priorities and streamline the implementation process. To that end, the Secretary-General noted in his report that the Economic and Social Council provides an appropriate platform for serving as Development Cooperation Forum, where global, regional and national strategies can be reviewed, and policy guidance provided to maximize its contribution to the pursuit of the United Nations development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals. ECOSOC will need to continue to hold meetings to evaluate the progress of the development agenda, but the high-level segment provides an opportunity to bring together the various policy priorities into a coherent framework.

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

- Is additional development assistance needed in order to make significant progress on the international development agenda?
- How can all the priorities of development conferences, summits, and agendas be brought together under one framework?
- What is the role of ECOSOC in the implementation and monitoring of international development goals?
- What is the relationship between economic and social development?



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- "Broken Promises Leave 3 Million Children to Die in Africa," *The Guardian*, 8 June 2005.
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- "Report: UN development goals not being met," *UN Wire*, 24 Aug 2004.

### UN Documents:

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E/2005/52  
E/2005/50  
E/2004/313  
E/2004/65  
E/2004/48  
E/2004/44

### Additional Web Resources:

- ECOSOC High-Level Segment -- [www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/](http://www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/)
- International Institute for Sustainable Development -- [www.iisd.ca/sd/ecosoc2005/](http://www.iisd.ca/sd/ecosoc2005/)
- Millennium Indicators Database -- [millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi\\_goals.asp](http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp)

## ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS: HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Five decades ago, two-thirds of the world's population lived in rural areas. Today, more than half live in cities. With this massive wave of urbanization has come many problems, including an increase in poverty levels. By 1997 the problems were bad enough that the Habitat Agenda was created to address the problems of human settlements in an urbanizing and globalizing world. It focuses on two core areas: ensuring adequate housing for all and developing sustainable human settlements.

Urban areas are focal points for investment, trade, finance, communications and production, causing many resources to flow through them. As the population is increasingly concentrated in urban centers, it is critical to properly allocate those resources to those who need them the most. This is the essence of sustainable development promoted by various UN programs and campaigns. The Habitat Agenda defines sustainable development as having three interdependent components: economic development,

social development and environmental protection.

UN-Habitat, a subsidiary organ of the UN, deals with funding, oversight, and development of human settlements. UN-Habitat has 2 major campaigns right now: the Global Campaign on Urban Governance and the Global Campaign for Secure Housing. These include City Alliance, a joint initiative with the World Bank to upgrade slums, promoting effective housing development policies and strategies, campaigning for housing rights, promoting sustainable cities and urban environmental planning and management, aiding post-conflict land management, and reconstructing countries devastated by war or natural disasters.

UN-Habitat also has 154 technical programs and projects in 61 countries, most of them in the least developed countries. These include major projects in post-war areas such as Afghanistan, Kosovo, Somalia, Iraq, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The agency's operational activities help governments create policies and strategies aimed at strengthening management capacity at both national and local levels. They focus on promoting shelter for all, improving urban governance, reducing urban poverty, improving the living environment, and managing disaster mitigation and post-conflict rehabilitation.

The Millennium Declaration called for improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. This seemingly large number is only 10% of the present slum population worldwide; it is estimated that if left unchecked, it will rise to 3 billion by 2050. Unfortunately, there are many negative trends that threaten the feasibility of these goals. The 1976 Vancouver Declaration identifies seven: inequitable growth; social, economic, ecological and environmental deterioration; world population growth trends; uncontrolled urbanization; rural backwardness; rural dispersion; and involuntary migration.

These are the underlying problems that the UN must address in order to reach its goal. ECOSOC, in its role as the oversight agency for all UN activities in the economic and social fields, bears special responsibility in this area for supporting and coordinating the work of UN Habitat as it relates to the other agencies and programmes in the UN system.

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

- In what ways can the international community assist UN-Habitat?
- What additional resources are needed to meet the Millennium Declaration's goals?
- What kinds of incentives or disincentives could be put in place to encourage greater improvement of economic and social development and environmental protection?
- What areas, sectors, issues need more focus? More resources? More oversight?

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- "Cities without slums," *UN-HABITAT*, v 7, n 3, 2001.
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- "Five Years After Habitat II," *UN-HABITAT*, v 7, n 1, 2001.
- "A future for urban planning," *UN-HABITAT*, v 10, n 4, Dec, 2004.
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 Res. S25.2 of 9. Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium. June 2001.  
 The Vancouver Declaration On Human Settlements. United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I). 31 May to 11 June 1976.

*Additional Web Resource:*

[www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)

**SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS:  
 GENETIC PRIVACY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Recent advancements in genetic engineering technologies have led to improvements in treatment and testing of disabling diseases, but have also produced discussions surrounding the dangers of these new technologies. The same tests that are used to identify diseases such as cystic fibrosis and sickle cell anemia can also be used to discriminate against those who have been identified as at-risk for developing such diseases. The Economic and Social Council has recognized this possibility and has attempted to reach solutions through debate and resolutions, but has not yet come to an agreement on all the relevant issues.

ECOSOC discussions on the question of genetic privacy and non-discrimination began in 2001. The topic has three primary goals. The first is to discourage use of genetic testing as an evaluation criterion for personal development, such as career choice and advancement or health insurance. The second is to alert others to the use of genetic information for classification. The final goal is to assist in providing privacy and protection in handling genetic information. The establishment of the topic and its goals was followed later that year by a resolution targeting these issues. In addition to urging member states to protect the privacy of subjects of genetic testing and prevent discrimination, the resolution encouraged development of national legislation and standards to provide protection of collected data. It also encouraged member states to continue developments in the field of genetic engineering while keeping these principles in mind. Finally, it requested that the Secretary-General bring the resolution to the attention of all member states, collect

comments on the issue, and present a report to the Council in 2003.

In 2003, the Secretary-General provided the Council with the requested report. However, several issues prevented the report from being completed in time to be thoroughly discussed by the Council. In addition, only a single member state, along with a few organizations in the United Nations system, provided comments on the document. As a result, the Council postponed discussions until 2004, when a follow-up report was provided to the Council. The reports contain comments from several member states regarding their progress in implementing regulations for protecting genetic information. The member states also offered several suggestions for areas where improvement is still needed. In response to the reports the Council approved a resolution encouraging states to continue to develop standards for the protection of genetic data and to prevent all forms of discrimination based on genetic data. The Council also decided to continue considering the various implications of genetic privacy and non-discrimination.

Several areas of this topic are still open to further discussion by this Council. For example, several member states have expressed concerns about development of biobanks, which are collections of genetic data used in genetic research. Recommendations could be made to limit collection based on patient permission, and to require disassociation of genetic data from the original patient. The Council could also recommend specific solutions to control access of genetic data by employers, insurance companies, and related organizations. In addition, the Council could address issues with respect to the potential misuse of personal genetic data by medical practitioners for personal gain, such as obtaining patents without patient consent. Existing resolutions in this area have also neglected to differentiate the use of genetic data in the administration of justice, such as criminal, paternity and identity cases.

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

- How can legislation be created that effectively deals with the issues of genetic privacy and non-discrimination, while keeping in accordance with ECOSOC resolutions and the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data?
- How can the competing need for genetic research and the desire for non-discrimination be balanced?
- How can the access to genetic data by employers and insurance companies be limited?
- What other international agreements might have implications for genetic privacy and non-discrimination?

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E/2003/L.36 (21 July)  
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*Additional Web Resources:*

[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)  
[bioethicsweb.ac.uk](http://bioethicsweb.ac.uk)

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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 the Status of Women (CSW). As a functional commission established by ECOSOC, the CSW is required to make annual reports on its activities to the members of ECOSOC. The CSW 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 CSW may also present their recommendations in resolution format, allowing ECOSOC the chance to review and formally pass the CSW's proposals.

To facilitate this process, the final session of ECOSOC and CSW will culminate in a joint session at which the CSW 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 CSW 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 CSW (Chapter VII), and Representatives may choose to do some additional research into these topics.

