CHAPTER VI.
THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

STATE MEMBERS

Angola	Ethiopia	Malta	Senegal
Argentina	Finland	Monaco	South Africa
Bangladesh	France	Myanmar	Spain
Bolivia	Germany	Netherlands	Suriname
Central African Republic	Haiti	Pakistan	Tunisia
Chile	India	Paraguay	Turkey
China	Indonesia	Peru	Ukraine
Cote d'Ivoire	Iran, Islamic Republic of	Republic of Korea	United Republic of Tanzania
Czech Republic	Italy	Republic of Moldova	United States of America
Dem. Peoples Rep. of Korea	Japan	Romania	Venezuela
Dem. Republic of the Congo	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Russian Federation	Zambia
Dominican Republic	Mali		

This year, AMUN is simulating the Commission on Social Development (CSD), one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Participation is open to one or two Representatives from any country currently seated on the Commission. The CSD will meet all four days of the Conference, and will present a report to ECOSOC on Tuesday afternoon. While the range of subject matter before the CSD may seem overwhelming, significant work on the topics of discussion is nonetheless achievable with thoughtful preparation.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CSD advises and assists ECOSOC by strengthening international cooperation for social development. The Commission was established in 1995 as the principle body responsible for the implementation and follow-up of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. The Commission has 46 members elected by ECOSOC for four year terms with broad regional representation. It meets annually to take up key themes of social development and report to the Council.

At its 39th session in February 2001, the Commission agreed on a multi-year program of work for 2002-2006, built around the follow-up to the Summit and the 24th special session of the General Assembly, incorporating the review of relevant United Nations plans and programs of action pertaining to the situation of social groups. The program of work includes poverty eradication, the integration of social and economic policies, full employment, and social integration.

THE SIMULATION

During the 2006 AMUN Conference, to allow for more detailed substantive debate the CSD simulation will be limited to two topics: Further Promotion of Equalization of Opportunities by, for and with Persons with Disabilities and Protection of their Human Rights, and Implementation of the Social Objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. The Commission will be required to report to ECOSOC on the subjects, but the report may take many different forms. The Commission is encouraged to write detailed reports on each topic, but may also present resolutions to ECOSOC for approval when appropriate to recommend actions.

PREPARATION

As a foundation for subsequent research, Representatives are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.166/9, available at: www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/agreements/index.html.) In addition, documents from past sessions that considered the topics under discussion will be an extremely helpful starting point. Careful review of the following topic overviews and the related bibliographies will provide some assistance in this regard. It should be noted however that the topic overviews should not serve as the terminal point for research efforts but only as the beginning.

FURTHER PROMOTION OF EQUALIZATION OF OPPORTUNITIES BY, FOR AND WITH PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND PROTECTION OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS

Nearly one of every ten people in the world has a disability, and in some areas the concentration is as high as one in five. The term "disability" covers a broad range of impairments, including deafness, schizophrenia, and dyslexia. According to the World Health Organization, 80 percent of people with disabilities live in developing countries, but no more than 5 percent of those have access to rehabilitation services. Because disability is often considered a medical issue, the social needs of people with disabilities have historically been neglected. People with disabilities face discrimination in education, access to buildings, employment, and transportation.

The United Nations first approached the issue in the 1950s, addressing the rehabilitation and assimilation of those with physical disabilities such as blindness and deafness. The Declaration on Social Progress in 1969 addressed the issue of mental disabilities, followed by the landmark Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons of 1971, declaring that those with mental disabilities have the same rights and privileges as every other person, including proper medical care, education, and legal protection from exploitation and discrimination. The Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, passed by the General Assembly in 1975, further enhanced the protection of people with disabilities, proclaiming that they should be granted full equal civil and political rights along with any service necessary to ensure equal rights.

Following the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, the United Nations adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons in 1982. The World Programme outlines not only the underlying social, economic, and physical causes of disabilities, but also the means for prevention, rehabilitation, and enhancement of services and opportunities for persons with disabilities to become a central and integral part of today's societies. The United Nations continued its work by adopting the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in 1993, at the conclusion of the Decade of Disabled Persons. The Standard Rules describe minimum standards and proper procedures for nations to adhere to in order to make the World Programme for Action a reality. A Special Rapporteur to the Commission on Social Development was also appointed in 1994 to assist the UN and its Member States in implementing the Standard Rules.

In the last ten years, disability issues have been integrated into many topics brought before the United Nations, including the Fourth Conference on Women in 1995 and the Special Session on Children in 2002. The Commission on Social Development has steadily debated and addressed the issues of disabled persons, working towards a "Comprehensive and Integral International Convention to Promote and Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities," which the Ad-Hoc Committee of the Economic and Social Council hopes to complete by 2007.

Despite the increased attention to issues faced by persons with disabilities, there are still many remaining challenges. Although the Standard Rules have been agreed on in principle, they have yet to be fully implemented by all Member States, in part because states aren't incented to take action at the national level. In addition, there is some lack of support at the international level. The Special Rapporteur's efforts are hindered by the lack of financial support for the Voluntary Fund on Disability, and disability per- spectives are not included in the Millennium Development Goals, despite their relevance to poverty eradication, employment, education, and health care. Further, some states argue that there is too much overlap between the disability rights frameworks, such as the World Programme for Action and the Standard Rules, or that the proposed convention will simply reiterate former conventions dealing with individual rights more generally.

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

- How well have the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities been implemented since they were introduced in 1994?
- What legal framework can be established within the international community to combat disability discrimination?
- What incentives or benefits can the international community provide so that Member States comply with the commitments they have agreed to?
- What is the role of NGOs in dealing with the issue, and how should that role be strengthened or diminished while respecting states' right to set policy?
- What measures of prevention or rehabilitation should be used to evaluate current policies?
- How are special groups of people, like women and children, especially affected by disability?

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Pineda, Victor. "A World Enabled," *UN Chronicle*, Dec 2004, v 41 i 1, www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2004/issue4/0404p12.html.

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E/CN.4/RES/2000/51
E/CN.5/2002/4, annex
A/Res/60/232
A/Res/58/132
A/Res/48/96 - Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
A/Res/37/52 - World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons
Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons
Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons
E/CN.5/2006/L.4
E/Res/2005/9
E/Res/2005/10

E/2005/26
E/Res/2004/15
E/Res/2003/49
E/Res/2002/26
HRC Resolution 2000/51

Additional Web Resources:

www.un.org/issues/m-disabl.html – The United Nations Global
    Programme on Disability
www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/ - United Nations Enable
www.ohchr.org/english/law/ - Office of the United Nations High
    Commissioner for Human Rights
www.ohchr.org/english/issues/disability/intro.htm – The Human
    Rights Dimension of Disability

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was adopted at the 37th summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). It is a vision and strategic framework designed to address escalating poverty levels and underdevelopment throughout the African continent. The NEPAD primary objectives are poverty eradication, sustainable development, integration into the global economy, and the empowerment of women. In order to attain these objectives, NEPAD places a priority on many aspects of social development, including health, education, science, and technology. NEPAD aims to find African solutions to African development. In exchange for focusing on these objectives, the international community agreed to increase its support of African development.

The Commission on Social Development has recognized the close relationship between social development and economic growth that is reflected in NEPAD. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development called for an integrated framework of socio-economic strategies to achieve poverty eradication, generation of productive employment, and social integration. Health and education in particular are vital to achieving a sustainable economy.

In 2004, on the recommendation of the Commission on Social Development, ECOSOC reaffirmed the need to strengthen international, regional, and sub-regional cooperation to promote social development and implementation of the World Summit for Social Development. It also urged the UN and international financial institutions to support African countries in accordance with the objectives and priorities of NEPAD. The Council recognized a need for greater integration between the UN and the specialized agencies, programmes and funds of the UN system.

There are challenges that make social development more difficult in Africa, including illiteracy, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and other communicable diseases. Addressing these problems requires financial resources, and an increased commitment to addressing the goals laid out not only in NEPAD, but in the Millennium Development Goals. The African Union has developed several institutions that could assist in fostering social development, including the African Court of Human and People's Rights and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC). It remains to be seen exactly what role these organizations will play. There is also a clear realization that the international community has a responsibility to assist African development at all levels, including social development. Problematically, funding and practical support to assist already acknowledged areas of need has not been forthcoming to any significant degree.

The Secretary-General published a report in 2005 that both highlighted the challenges facing the implementation of NEPAD and suggested some improvements to the UN system that would promote sustainable development in Africa. In particular, the report indicated that NEPAD requires increased international support and strengthened private initiative. It called for an increase in aid to the levels committed in Monterrey, Mexico, with half of this increase to go toward African development. It also called for a reduction in the requirements for debt relief, and noted the importance of trade policies in supporting development. There was a focus on the role of the private sector, as well as the coordination provided by the United Nations.

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

- How does social development relate to the objectives of NEPAD? What is the role of the Commission for Social Development in implementing these objectives?
- What kinds of private initiatives could help sustain development in Africa?
- What measures can the United Nations take to encourage Member States to increase development aid and debt relief?
- How can the United Nations provide support to NEPAD and coordination between UN bodies, Member States, and the private sector?

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"State Keen to Promote NEPAD in Rural Areas," *The East African Standard* (Nairobi), 18 April 2005.
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Additional Web Resources:

www.nepad.org
www.un.org/africa/osaa - UN Office of the Special Advisor on Africa
www.africa-union.org – African Union
www.uneca.org – Economic Commission for Africa