



CHAPTER FIVE

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

Members of the Economic and Social Council:

Algeria	Indonesia	Poland
Barbados	Iraq	Portugal
Belarus	Japan	Republic of Korea
Bolivia	Kazakhstan	Republic of
Brazil	Liechtenstein	Moldova
Cameroon	Luxembourg	Romania
Canada	Malawi	Russian Federation
Cape Verde	Malaysia	Saint Kitts & Nevis
China	Mauritius	Saint Lucia
Congo	Morocco	Saudi Arabia
Cote d'Ivoire	Mozambique	Somalia
El Salvador	Namibia	Sudan
Estonia	Netherlands	Sweden
France	New Zealand	United Kingdom
Germany	Niger	United States
Greece	Norway	Uruguay
Guatemala	Pakistan	Venezuela
Guinea-Bissau	Peru	
India	Philippines	

Purview of the Simulation:

The Economic and Social Council is the principal UN organ responsible for coordinating economic, social and related works of 14 specialized agencies, 10 functional commissions, and five regional commissions. ECOSOC accepts reports and recommendations from other UN bodies, including the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). Along with its coordinating role, ECOSOC gathers information and advises Member States on economic, social, humanitarian and human rights programs. ECOSOC also coordinates and collaborates with autonomous specialized agencies that work closely with the United Nations. These include multilateral financial and trade institutions, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

Website: www.un.org/docs/ecosoc/

SITUATION OF AND ASSISTANCE TO PALESTINIAN WOMEN

The ongoing tensions and conflict between Israel and the Palestinian people have had particularly severe consequences for Palestinian women. The situation of women throughout the world has been an important topic for the UN, which recognizes that in many countries and regions women are not afforded the same human rights or status as men. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women specifically address these problems in the form of international instruments. Even when not focused specifically on women, the treaties which make up the international framework on human rights have included provisions designed to protect, assist, and empower women. As a response to the interrelation of women's rights with other human rights and development goals, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) created the Commission on the Status of Women, which focuses on the situation of and assistance to women in various geographical regions, including the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), the Gaza Strip, and West Jerusalem.

In addition to ECOSOC and its programs, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has established the Economic Security and Rights Programme and SABAYA, Women's Community-Based Empowerment located in Palestine. These agencies work on achieving gender equality in democratic governance, reducing feminized poverty, and combating exclusion through the realization of women's human rights and human security. SABAYA oversees the development and operation of eighteen women's centers in the OPT, through funding by the United Nations

Development Programme, UNIFEM, and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security funding.

Since 2000, the conflict between Israel and Palestine has changed drastically with far-reaching consequences for all Palestinians, but especially women. Violence between Israel and Palestine, the harsh economic situation, and other deteriorating conditions are resulting in injury and loss of life to Palestinian women and families. Women have suffered the most during this conflict due to their lower income level, declining living conditions, social exclusions, deteriorating social networks, and undeveloped capabilities. The conflict has exacerbated these latent challenges by imposing additional food security issues, blockages and closures, as well as limited and restricted access to medical care, productive resources, and education services. Many women have also suffered psychological trauma.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), which conducted census reports in 1997 and 2007, is responsible for monitoring the rates of education, employment, domestic violence, participation in public development and access to medical care. The PCBS notes that 14.1% of Palestinian women are illiterate. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has deployed a Gender Adviser to support the work of the United Nations Country Team, identifying gaps in current programmes/activities, assessing the quality and effectiveness of the existing gender equality programs, identifying deficiencies in these programs, and identifying strategies to overcome these deficiencies. Unfortunately, many of the gaps in current efforts are a result of the ongoing violence in the region. Increased restrictions on movement prevent women from accessing resources that are available. A comprehensive approach is needed that can operate within the security and economic constraints imposed by Israel, while still

providing meaningful assistance to Palestinian women within the OPT. Additionally, all initiatives must be developed and implemented in a culturally sensitive way, by affirming women's rights without provoking conflict by contradicting social values.

Several initiatives are currently being considered for future actions to address the condition of women in Palestine, such as the systematic and effective utilization of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to improve the status of Palestinian women. In furtherance of this goal, increased support is needed from Member States, United Nations entities, and NGOs to provide financial and technical assistance to Palestinian women. Similarly, assistance focused on the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of education, health, social welfare, employment, and economic development would act to alleviate the lower social status and income level that women face. Although some improvements have been made toward gender equality, such as the fact that five out of twenty-two Palestinian government ministries are run by women, much work must still be done.

ECOSOC has emphasized the importance of the continued presence and operation of United Nations entities in the OPT and refugee camps. Support from the international community is crucial in a variety of areas, such as providing emergency assistance to relieve the pressures of limited resources and declining food security. The General Assembly recently recommitted itself to continued and renewed efforts to end violent confrontations in OPT; this would ideally include full involvement of women in conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives in the region. Protecting and enhancing the rights of Palestinian women will require full Israeli compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to protect the rights of Palestinian women and return refugees and displaced women and children to their homes. This in turn will depend on continued review by the Secretary-General and support by the international community.

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

- How can the United Nations and its entities implement the changes on a level that will impact and ultimately improve the situation of Palestinian women?
- What are the problems created by the Israeli occupation in 1961, and how does this occupation directly affect the Palestinian women?
- How can the human rights declarations be better implemented to reduce violence and increase access to resources, including prenatal and ante-natal care, education, food, and employment, in a zone of conflict and occupation?

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A/RES/62/93
A/RES/48/104
A/RES/34/180
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E/2008/7
E/CN.6/2009/L.2/Rev.1
E/CN.6/2009/5
E/CN.6/2008/6
E/CN.6/2007/4
ECOSOC 2008/11
ECOSOC 2007/7
ECOSOC 2006/8
ESA/STAT/AC.168/30
SC/9053

Additional Web Resources:

www.unifem.org - United Nations Development Fund for Women
www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw - United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
www.arableagueonline.org - League of Arab States
www.iwc-peace.org - International Women's Commission
www.unfpa.org - United Nations Population Fund

MAINSTREAMING DISABILITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

It has been estimated that 650 million people, or roughly 10% of the world's population, suffer from some form of disability. Disability crosses all age, gender and racial categories and has been a topic discussed in the United Nations for over forty years. What seems to have escaped the discussion in the past is the relationship between recognizing disability and promoting successful development. Persons with disabilities make up 20% of those living on less than \$1 per day; 80% of disabled people live in the developing world. These statistics underscore the importance of including disability in any development efforts. Full inclusion of persons with disabilities is essential to successfully achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Early UN action to establish and mainstream disability rights in development was confined to two key instruments. Prior to the

United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), many Member States were of the position that persons with disabilities were protected by previous documents including the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Declaration of Social Development and the Declaration of the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons and therefore, specific documents connecting disability and development were unnecessary. The first UN instrument to link disability to social and economic development was the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. The Programme of Action identified goals of full equality for and participation of disabled persons in social and development areas.

In 1990, ECOSOC passed Resolution 1990/26 which requested the Commission on Social Development to establish a working group to develop standard rules for the equalization of persons with disabilities. The resulting document, Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, became the second instrument within the UN development framework to help promote the inclusiveness of persons with disabilities in development. The document is composed of 22 rules designed to incorporate persons with disabilities into all facets and stages of development, from education to healthcare and employment. While not legally binding, the rules served as the foundation for including the disabled in development strategies for over a decade. The rules also established a Special Rapporteur beginning in 1994 and currently mandated through 2011 to promote the enforcement of the rules.

In more recent years, UN action on mainstreaming disability in the development agenda has taken large advancements. The Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons was adopted on 13 December 2006 and entered into force on 3 May 2008. The quick negotiation, record-breaking first-day signatures, and rapid-effective date display the true paradigm shift which is taking place. The convention shifts from treating persons with disabilities as objects to be included in development planning and implementation to integrating them at all levels of development as subjects with rights and responsibilities. This is the first legally binding treaty specifically concerning persons with disabilities and their development rights. As such, it represents both a human rights treaty and a development instrument.

In keeping with this ground-breaking treaty, the World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO) and other leading development players have begun to further promote the complete integration of persons with disabilities. The ILO has published a series of papers on including disabled persons in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as the preferred method for combating poverty in the developing world. As the ILO takes a larger role in development, ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities is gaining momentum within the organization and its development efforts. ECOSOC has welcomed the help of these organizations, recognizing that mainstreaming disability is a goal that cannot be accomplished without the support of the international community. However, ECOSOC has noted that unfortunately policy is often disconnected from practice.

ECOSOC has specifically urged all UN entities, NGOs and Member States to include persons with disabilities in decision-making processes and policy planning for the future, and stressed that decision-makers must be held accountable for the inclusion

of persons with disabilities. In order for disabilities to be truly mainstreamed, Member States and agencies must allocate resources for education and technical assistance. Furthermore, ECOSOC has encouraged all actors to promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities by providing access to education and training, developing microcredit programs which specifically target persons with disabilities, and fostering inclusive employment and human resource practices.

The UN must also make changes if it is to lead by example. Efforts are currently under way to include the rights of persons with disabilities and related concerns explicitly within all UN guidelines, and at all stages of processes including engagement, country analysis, strategic planning, and monitoring and evaluation in keeping with the Convention. General Assembly Resolution 61/106 urges the Secretary-General to promote the accessibility and services of the UN to persons with disabilities. This includes physical changes to UN property for better access, recruitment and training of persons with disabilities to serve as members of UN staff, and improvement of knowledge and information about disabilities.

Despite the advances of the past decade, persons with disabilities continue to be marginalized in parts of the world. With 80-90% of disabled persons in developing countries unemployed, there is still much work left to be done. With a legally binding treaty finally in place and with the 2015 target for the Millennium Development Goals fast approaching, the stage has been set to integrate persons with disabilities in all aspects of development. Pursuant to the treaty, Member States and UN entities alike are bound to promote the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society. Two of the most important areas requiring action are employment and education. Future actions will have to focus on both planning and actual implementation. One potential difficulty is the lack of a universally accepted definition of “mainstreaming disability.” While the framework is in place, the information about disabilities is still difficult to access in many areas of the world; this information must be made available if true mainstreaming is to occur.

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

- Is it necessary to define “mainstreaming disability” and if so, how should it be defined?
- Is there a centralized organization which can take the lead in coordinating efforts on this issue, or is the current structure sufficient to be successful?
- To what extent are persons with disabilities currently being fully included in development efforts?
- Should mainstreaming efforts be focused on particular aspects of development, such as education or employment? If so, which are the most important aspects?

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ECOSOC 2006/16

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ECOSOC 2005/9

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World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons

Additional Web Resources:

www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/ - World Health Organization: Disabilities

www.un.org/disabilities - UN Enable: Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities

www.worldbank.org/disability - World Bank: Disability

www.ilo.org - International Labour Organization

ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW: IMPLEMENTING THE INTERNATIONALLY AGREED GOALS AND COMMITMENTS IN REGARD TO GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

The purpose of the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) is to “scale-up and speed-up” implementation by allowing stakeholders to engage in discussion about development goals and learn from each other. The AMR was created following the 2005 World Summit, at which the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was charged with guaranteeing that the agreements reached in major United Nations conferences and summits were honored. The mandate, detailed in paragraph 155 of the World Summit Outcome Document, also requires ECOSOC to hold annual ministerial-level substantive

reviews (AMRs) to assess progress by drawing on its functional and regional commissions and other international institutions, in accordance with their respective mandates.

The General Assembly responded to the World Summit by adopting Resolution 61/16, which further defined the role of AMRs. The Assembly’s enumerations included expectations that AMRs be part of the ECOSOC’s high-level segment, that they focus on goals common amongst UN conferences, summits, the MDGs and other IADGs, review progress made in the implementation of those goals, and finally, assess the impact of the conferences and summits on the aforementioned goals. The General Assembly’s intent was to allow for a yearly high-level assessment of various governments, commissions, and organizations’ progress towards the completion of the MDGs and other goals and targets agreed on at the major UN conferences and summits conducted over the past 15 years. The voluntary presentations give nations the opportunity to share their experiences with regard to implementing development policy, particularly the policies, initiatives and successes that might be sustained, expanded and emulated by other nations.

Each AMR is guided by a central theme. The 2009 theme is “implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health.” Eight countries volunteered to present at the 2008 ministerial review: Bolivia, China, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Japan, Mali, Sri Lanka and Sudan. The 2009 AMR took place 6-9 July 2009 during the high-level segment of the annual session of the Economic and Social Council at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The Economic and Social Council is expected to adopt a ministerial declaration at the end of the high-level segment. The major UN commitments to public health include Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4: Reduce Child Mortality, 5: Improve Maternal Health, and 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases. The AMR will discuss the successes and challenges encountered in working toward these goals.

In preparation for the AMR, an e-discussion on achieving sustainable development was jointly organized by the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It took place from 29 January to 26 February 2009. The e-discussion served as a means to engage experts, practitioners, and policy-makers from various regions and stakeholder groups in a transnational dialog on specific aspects of the implementation of the internationally agreed upon goals and commitments in regard to public health. The e-discussion was organized into two parts; Part I addressed strengthening health systems, and Part II considered emerging and future health care challenges.

After the e-discussion, a preparatory meeting was held in March. At that meeting the discussion centered on three elements: where the international community stands on achieving public health goals; how the global economic crisis will impact implementation of those goals; and health challenges particular to post-crisis situations. At that meeting the body recognized the intersection of health issues with each of the MDGs, and highlighted the need for improved data and reporting, especially in light of the current financial crisis and lower aid levels. Various experts discussed the direct relationship between income and health, and urged low-income countries to devote 15% of their budgets to the provision of basic health services.

ECOSOC also held two special events in preparation for the AMR. On 12 February 2009 a meeting was held to discuss the “Contribution of Traditional Medicine to the Realization of International Development Objectives related to Global Public Health.” Panelists discussed the ways in which traditional medicine can contribute to the achievement of public health goals, and also noted the importance of developing a policy framework in this area. The second event took place on 23 February 2009, and focused on “Philanthropy and the Global Public Health Agenda.” At this meeting executives and philanthropists met with ECOSOC members to discuss raising the profile of tropical diseases which have been largely neglected, building effective public-private partnerships, and improving health outcomes for women and girls.

The AMR is a unique intergovernmental, multi-stakeholder platform for the assessment of public health goals and challenges with the ultimate objective of providing a direct link between policy and action. It acts as a tool for ECOSOC to better assess the successes and roadblocks faced by developing nations in efforts to achieve sustainability. The review gives the global community an opportunity to reaffirm their international commitments to global public health, including achieving the health-related MDGs. In order to meet the collective public health goals, both individual and collective action will need to be coordinated across a range of stakeholders to ensure progress is maintained. ECOSOC’s role is to encourage the international community to implement the findings and conclusions of the AMR, and identify ways of meeting the challenges identified by the AMR.

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

- How can the international community ensure that public health goals are met universally?
- Should public health issues be approached from a global, regional, or national level?
- How can ECOSOC provide leadership toward continued support of health issues in the face of declining aid commitments?
- What role should the United Nations play in developing strategies to coordinate potentially overlapping efforts toward achieving the MDGs and AMRs?

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 A/RES/61/16
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 A/RES/60/35
 A/RES/60/1
 A/RES/59/27
 A/RES/58/173
 A/RES/56/128 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Additional Web Resources:

www.globalhealth.org - Global Health Council
www.un.org/millenniumgoals - Millennium Development Goals
www.un.org/ecosoc/newfunct/amr2009.shtml - 2009 Annual Ministerial Review

REPORTS OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (ECA) AND THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS (CND)

In addition to the three main topics on ECOSOC’s agenda, the Council will also receive reports on the final day from the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). As functional and regional commissions established by ECOSOC, the ECA and CND are required to make annual reports on their activities to the members of ECOSOC. While these reports are generally accepted pro forma, ECOSOC may also choose to take some action on the recommendations contained in the report. These bodies may also present their recommendations in resolution format, allowing ECOSOC the chance to review and formally pass the proposals.

To facilitate this process, the final day will culminate in a joint session at which the reports and recommendations will be made to ECOSOC. Following each presentation, it will be up to the joint session to take further action. Please be aware that, as commissions of ECOSOC, these bodies have 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 ECA (Chapter VI) and CND (Chapter VII); Representatives may also choose to do some additional research on these topics in preparation.