



CHAPTER SIX

THE ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL

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CHINA	KAZAKHSTAN	TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
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PURVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

The Economic and Social Council is the principal United Nations 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 United Nations bodies, including the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). 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 organizations include multilateral financial and trade institutions, such as the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

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

UNITED NATIONS PUBLIC-PRIVATE ALLIANCE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Around two-thirds of the world's people live in rural areas and are dependent on agricultural activities for their livelihood. Current economic estimates suggest that by 2025 the majority of the global population will live in urban settings, but that 60 percent of people in poverty will still be living in rural areas. In its efforts to meet targets set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for poverty reduction and sustainable development, the United Nations has promoted and supported efforts to enhance rural development. As it prepares to continue this work in support of the new Sustainable Development Goals, it must refocus and revitalize its efforts.

Rural development has been on the United Nations agenda for years. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development addressed rural development and sustainable agriculture during its

meeting in 1992. Agenda 21, the outcome of that conference, produced an entire chapter on the importance of rural and sustainable agriculture and made numerous recommendations for Member States. In 1995, the Commission on Sustainable Development heavily focused on rural development in its annual Report, noting that while some success has been made, progress in promoting development in rural areas in many countries was slow. Rural development was again addressed at the five-year review of Agenda 21 in 1997, before the United Nations set specific targets for decreasing poverty and prompting development in the MDGs in 2000. While the MDGs did not specifically address rural development, they did implicitly address the topic through Goal 1: Food Security and Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) took up "Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development" as its 2003 High Level Segment. At the end of the session, ECOSOC adopted a Ministerial Declaration on the High Level Segment topic. In the Declaration, ECOSOC stated that rural development should be an integral part of national and international development policies. A key element in the Declaration was the role of partnerships and alliances from across a broad range of sectors to promote an integrated approach to rural development. ECOSOC pledged to "facilitate and nurture" alliances between governments, private actors, donors and non-governmental organizations.

In 2013, ECOSOC created the United Nations Public-Private Alliance for Rural Development (UNPPA) with the mission of identifying and promoting successful business policies and practices that encourage economic and social progress in rural areas. The major goals of the Alliance are to work as a catalyst and facilitator for the creation of partnerships, to provide a platform for collaboration, and to bring the results of these efforts to the attention of the international community.



ECOSOC piloted the program in Madagascar and the Dominican Republic. The first assessment of the two pilot programs was presented to ECOSOC at the 2007 session. Identifying a limited partnership-development skill base as the greatest barrier to successful public-private partnerships, the assessment highlighted the need to enhance government administrative and negotiation skills to improve the promotion and potential fast-tracking of public-private partnerships. The assessment also concluded that institutional capacity for developing partnerships needed to be strengthened. ECOSOC also invited Madagascar and the Dominican Republic to conduct assessments of their own capacity and mechanisms for developing and promoting public-private partnerships. Additionally, support for global information dissemination can be further strengthened.

As an outgrowth of ECOSOC's work in 2007, the non-profit Public-Private Alliance Foundation was established with the support of ambassadors from a number of States. It has since worked to foster collaboration and raise public awareness and investment funds for projects to support the United Nations efforts toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Foundation has organized several projects since its formation, including efforts to build and deliver cleaner-burning stoves in Haiti and to promote microfinance in Madagascar.

The 2009 report of the Secretary-General highlighted the newly emerged challenges facing the rural poor. In 2008 and 2009, global food prices rose rapidly and the global economy slowed sharply. Localized setbacks, such as government instability and natural disasters, also helped to undermine progress against rural poverty. In reviewing the impact of efforts and planning in the pilot countries, the Secretary-General's report found many specific instances of progress against rural poverty. The United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) supported four projects between 2007 and 2009 targeted at improving small farmers' access to tools, funding, information and markets, aiming to strengthen rural inhabitants' food security, incomes and support organizations. This increased access may help small farmers to better cope with high input costs and to prepare for natural disasters. IFAD is replicating these kinds of projects in other pilot countries. Growing Sustainable Business, an initiative of the United Nations Development Programme, has promoted both eco-tourism and the use of solar power, as well as strengthening small- and medium sized enterprises in the hydro-carbon industries. The report also examined rural development plans and a limited number of early pilot projects focused on food security and improving market access for rural and small farmers. However, the Council has not acted on this report or revisited this topic since.

Much has changed in the intervening time. The Millennium Development Goals have proven mostly successful, but no goals were fully met, nor did the successes solve the challenges of poverty and equality. Efforts to promote public-private partnerships for development continue to confront a range of challenges, whether natural, like climate change and natural disaster, or man-made, such as government instability, bureaucracy or corruption. The collaborative approach with multi-sector alliances taken by UNPPA and promoted by groups like the Public-Private Alliance enhances the opportunities and resources available for sustainable rural development programs. Their strength lies in the ability to pull together existing networks and programs, educating and empowering private partners in support of sustainable development. The United Nations is currently pivoting from the Millennium Development Goals toward addressing global poverty with its Post-2015

Agenda and the new Sustainable Development Goals. As it does so, the United Nations must seize the opportunity to revitalize and refocus its work on the potential of public-private partnerships as a key component in efforts toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

- What other opportunities for partnerships with the private sector exist for promoting rural development, and how can ECOSOC encourage their implementation?
- What other efforts by the United Nations and its partners are underway to address rural development? Are there lessons that can be used to improve public-private partnerships?
- What can be done to improve the institutional capacity of the United Nations for public-private partnerships?
- How suitable for addressing the new Sustainable Development Goals are public-private partnerships? Are there specific goals to which they are well-suited, based on the pilot programs and the contributions of these partnerships towards the Millennium Development Goals?

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TAKING ACTION AGAINST GENDER-RELATED KILLING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Worldwide, one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some way. An estimated 600 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not against the law. In the worst cases, these women die from their injuries or are murdered outright. Gender-related killing occurs when the main motive of the killing is gender-based discrimination. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, these killings do not arise suddenly but are part of a “continuum of violence” against the victim.

In 2013, an estimated 38 percent of all female murder victims were killed by their intimate partners—in some countries, the most likely place for a woman to be murdered is in her own home. While it is difficult to determine how many of these murders were specifically motivated by gender-based discrimination, the high overall percentage supports an inference that most of these killings are so motivated. Some other examples of gender-based killing include rape-murder; “honor killings” where the woman is murdered by her own family for transgressions such as refusing to honor an arranged marriage; murder based on the belief that the female victim is practicing witchcraft or sorcery; dowry

killings that occur when a new bride is murdered or driven to suicide by the groom’s family in an attempt to extort additional dowry; and sex selection in the form of female infanticide or feticide. The gender-related killing of women and girls continues to be one of the most under-reported and least-prosecuted crimes in the world, especially in regions where patriarchal societies continue to enforce laws that limit the rights of women. Disturbingly, statistics show that the prevalence of gender-related killings has been increasing over the past few years.

Despite attempts by the United Nations to achieve gender equality throughout the world, millions of women do not have equal status as laid out in international human rights instruments, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. While these binding international agreements hold all States Parties responsible for ensuring women equal rights and protection before the law, they have failed to provide a strategy to actively combat the continuing abuses faced by millions of women worldwide.

The long history of the United Nations advocating for women’s rights began in a more general fashion that was not focused on killings specifically. In 1946, the United Nations established the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Until the creation of UN Women in 2010, the CSW was the chief United Nations body responsible for promoting women’s rights, researching the state of women’s rights worldwide and establishing policy standards on gender equality. In 1979, the General Assembly adopted CSW’s draft of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which included calls to abolish customs and laws that perpetuate discrimination against women. The Convention took effect on 3 September 1981. In 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. Many of the issues addressed at this Conference focused on violence against women, including the effects of armed conflict on women, inadequate promotion and protection of the human rights of women, and the persistent discrimination against the rights of the girl child.

In December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution on the recommendation of ECOSOC that was specifically focused on the prevalence of gender-related killings of women and girls. The resolution expressed the concerns of Member States regarding the increasing number of gender-related killings and outlined a series of suggestions to address this issue. Member States are encouraged to not only exercise due diligence in handling cases of gender-related violence, but to also pursue strengthened programs and more robust justice systems in order to properly protect victims and prosecute their assailants. The resolution also acknowledged that, while many of the changes needed to improve upon this issue must come from Member States, relevant United Nations organizations including CSW and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime can also assist Member States in taking action against gender-related violence and killings of women and girls.

Since the passage of this resolution, the United Nations and its Member States have been pushing toward improving the safety of women and girls. With campaigns such as UNiTE To End Violence Against Women, the United Nations has worked on providing safe places for women in order to minimize violence and harassment of women in public places. In an effort to improve the situation for women and girls, the United Nations encourages a community-level approach by engaging with local



governments as well as nongovernmental organizations and police staff.

Periodic review of the numerous initiatives already in place is also imperative. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, CEDAW, Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and other international instruments for the protection of women's rights are widely adopted but not often adhered to or used in combating gender-related killing of women and girls. For example, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women calls on Member States to exercise due diligence when they learn of violence against women, including gender-related killings. Adherence to this provision is sporadic as many States are reluctant to investigate specific instances of violence or provide protection and redress to the victims.

The issue of gender-related killing is one that is, more often than not, addressed on an international or perhaps regional scale, when it must also be dealt with on a State-by-State and local basis. While murder is illegal everywhere, the United Nations has repeatedly called for any exceptions for "honor killings" and the like to be removed from national legislation. Similarly, legal reforms to criminalize domestic violence could provide victims with a way to safely report domestic violence to local authorities and grant a better chance at stopping the violence before it escalates to murder. Some States, particularly in Latin America, have established legal distinctions between gender-related killings and general homicide in an effort to provide greater deterrence for such crimes and greater protections for victims and those who report the crimes. CSW has approved of such efforts and encouraged other States to follow this example of adopting targeted legislation.

Inadequate national legislative measures are only part of the problem, however. Even in countries where adequate legal protections are in place, enforcement rates are low. Gender-related killings go unreported, local authorities fail to investigate these crimes when they are reported, prosecutors fail to charge the perpetrators with murder and courts impose only nominal sentences. General criminal justice reform can help to provide improved standards of prosecution and due process so gender-related killings may no longer be committed with impunity. Finally, cultural shifts must occur across entire societies that do not view these crimes as morally wrong or may even openly endorse them. Looking forward, ECOSOC should examine past and current United Nations human rights education, awareness and training programs, especially those propagated through the World Programme for Human Rights Education, to determine how to integrate the issue of gender-related killings into such programs or develop additional initiatives.

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

- What differentiates gender-related killings from other murders? How might existing laws against murder fail to adequately protect against gender-related killings?
- What can the international community do to propagate the criminalization of gender-related killings and of violence against women in general?
- What actions could Member States take to ensure that cases of gender-related killings are sufficiently investigated and prosecuted?

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