



HamMUN 2018

"Reflect the Past. Reshape the Future."

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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WELCOME LETTER

Honorable Delegates,

We, as chairs, are very glad to welcome you to this year's ECOSOC at HamMUN 2018. All you have been chosen as members of this intermediate committee, which means that some may already have gathered some MUN experience, whereas for many others it will be their first experience.

No matter your background, we strongly recommend you read this study guide carefully as it will introduce the two topics chosen for the debate. A good knowledge of the topic and the rules is essential to be able to actively participate and to represent your country to your best ability. The quality of the discussion and the enjoyment you can get out of it heavily rely on your preparation, so we highly encourage any additional research.

Both topics presented to you embody the essence of ECOSOC: sustainable global growth and social equality; by representing your country's opinion, you will try to achieve a feasible and long term solution to the problems.

We hope that all of you will soon discover what makes taking part at an MUN such a special experience and why so many delegates become addicted. It does not only give you the singular opportunity to test your ability as a diplomat and explore the United Nations systems in detail, but teaches you important abilities, such as public speaking, teamwork and research. As convinced and addicted MUNers, we promise to guide you along the way and are always ready to help whether it be during the conference or while you are still preparing.

See you all very soon,

Abdullah Khan & Sarah Hechler
Chairs of the HamMUN ECOSOC 2018

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established in 1945 by the United Nations (UN) charter as one of the six main organs of the United Nations.¹ It was tasked with coordinating UN entities, shedding a spotlight on many global issues, and building a stable partnership with the rest of the world. Currently the council oversees 14 UN specialized agencies, ten functional commissions and five regional commissions; in addition to receiving reports from nine UN funds and programs.² Overall the council holds 54 Member States, which are elected by the General Assembly (GA) every three years.³

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/1⁴ changed some of the duties of the council to include the importance of recognizing and addressing challenges; and strengthen its role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDGs form one of ECOSOC's key talking and debating points, which the council has dedicated many resolutions⁵ to. They are sub-divided into three divisions: economic, social and environmental.⁶

Each year in July, ECOSOC holds a substantive session with their location switching between the Headquarters in New York and Geneva. During these weeks the representatives designate one topic as the defining challenge of global significance of that year and consequently address it.⁷ Lastly the council is tasked with following up on recent UN summits and conferences, where the council passes a report or follow-up in the form of a draft resolution that is often recommended to the General Assembly; in order to coordinate and summarize the efforts undertaken by the UN after the conference has terminated.⁸

¹ United Nations Economic and Social Council, "About Us", *ECOSOC*, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/about-us>

² United Nations, "What does ECOSOC do?", *ECOSOC*, 2005, accessed September 5, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/ECOSOCinfo%20rev%20et.pdf>

³ United Nations, "What does ECOSOC do?", *ECOSOC*, 2005, accessed September 5, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/meetings/2005/hl2005/ECOSOCinfo%20rev%20et.pdf>

⁴ United Nations General Assembly, "Review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council", (New York: September 20, 2013) accessed September 10, 2018, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/68/1>

⁵ United Nations General Assembly, "Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system", (New York: December 21, 2016), accessed September 10, 2018, <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/243>

⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Promoting Sustainable Development", *ECOSOC*, accessed September 6, 2018, <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/promotion-du-développement-durable>

⁷ United Nations Economic and Social Council, "About Us", *ECOSOC*, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/about-us>

⁸ United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Follow-up to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice," (New York: July 2, 2018), accessed on September 9, 2018, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2018/16

TOPIC A: UNILATERAL ECONOMIC MEASURES AS A MEANS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COERCION AGAINST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

DEFINITIONS

To understand the debate that has formed around the issue of economic coercion, one must first familiarize oneself with the basic terminology and definition of the topic itself. Economic coercion may be defined as “measures of an economic—as contrasted with diplomatic or military— character taken to induce [a target State] to change some policy or practices or even its governmental structure”.⁹ A country deciding to put unilateral economic measures into action has been assigned the term “sender,” while the state targeted by these actions is called “target”.¹⁰

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND TO THE TOPIC

The practice of one Member State threatening economic consequences when addressing policies or guidelines of other Member States has had a long standing tradition in the international community and the frequency of its use has only incremented in the past years.¹¹ This is particularly because this policy does not require the use of physical force as opposed to military strikes; it is, therefore, far more likely to be viewed favourably by the public and the international community. Even though these measures are in opposition to the Non-discrimination rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), this has not caused a change in behaviour.¹²

The effect of economic coercion on developing countries

To best understand the devastating effect that unilateral economic measures have on a developing country and why it is once again necessary to take action, one should look at two examples: Cuba and Madagascar.

When the United States of America (USA) revoked Madagascar’s eligibility under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, due to political tensions and a change in government, its access to duty free imports on certain American products was removed. This caused entire industries to collapse and increased the poverty rate by 75.3%.¹³ According to the World Development Indicators, the economic growth dropped by 4.4%, which also affected the long term economic outlook.¹⁴ Swaziland, Gambia and South Sudan experienced similar

⁹ *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, s.v. “Economic Coercion” by Barry E. Carter, accessed September 4, 2018, <http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1518?prd=EPIIL>

¹⁰ *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*, s.v. “Economic Coercion” by Barry E. Carter, accessed September 4, 2018, <http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1518?prd=EPIIL>

¹¹ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

¹² World Trade Organisation, “Principles of the trading system”, accessed September 5, 2018, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact2_e.htm

¹³ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

¹⁴ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

fates¹⁵ which shows how preferential trade agreements can have a similar effect to trade embargoes when revoked and also have adverse effects on public welfare and human rights.

Remarkable similarities can be found when assessing the measures that the United States of America applied against Cuba. The sanctions, which have been in place for the past five decades, were originally imposed to urge Cuba towards “democratization and greater respect for human rights”.¹⁶ This still affects many sectors, such as the health system where the sanctions have limited the attainability of medicine and spare parts for treatment equipment.¹⁷ This creates a necessity to use intermediate suppliers at higher costs. Cuban society has suffered greatly from this limited access to international markets, which also caused its ability to remain innovative and competitive to decrease.¹⁸

Both examples showcase the amount of influence economic coercion has on a single economy. It is questionable if the suspension of commercial and trade activities, due to political events, should be continued, especially in regard to countries of the Global South. For the political and economic consequences do not only target the government, but ultimately affects the citizens negatively.¹⁹

¹⁵ Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, “Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, n.d., accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.aalco.int/10-ET-GA%20brief2007.pdf>

¹⁶United States of America Treasury, “Cuban Democracy Act”, accessed September 9, 2018, <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/cda.pdf>

¹⁷ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

¹⁸ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

¹⁹ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

UN MEASURES

The earliest example one might find of the UN addressing this issue may be found in the Resolution 2131, passed by the General Assembly in December 1965,²⁰ which proclaims that “no State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights or to secure from it advantages of any kind”.²¹ In the following years, the General Assembly (GA) has continued to address different facts of the issue, even electing in 2004 to debate the topic ‘Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion’ every three years as a set topic in its agenda.²²

December 1983 marked an important development in the debate as the resolution A/RES/38/179 was the first to remark the primary responsibility of developed countries to take action.²³ This was a vital step, as it shifted the discussion in the GA from general remarks on the topic to practical measures, specifically regarding the role of the international community in strengthening and protecting the position of developing targets against their economically stronger senders.²⁴ The resolution also charged the Secretary-General to compile information on the consequences of economic coercive measures on the government and population of developing countries.²⁵

One of the main issues, why this policy is widely regarded as a gross violation of the UN charter is the fact that extraterritorial economically coercive measures infringe upon the sovereignty of a nation.²⁶ The sovereignty of a Member States is one of the core principals of the UN and also very important to the foreign and domestic policy of many nations.²⁷ Any breach of this is, therefore, seen as a great offense and can even be the reason for a trial. This was the case when Nicaragua demanded reparations by the USA in front of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for infringing upon their sovereignty – amongst others – by imposing unilateral sanctions.²⁸ Yet, as the USA failed to recognize the verdict, there were no long-term consequences.

Resolution A/RES/51/22 took up yet another problem and reviewed the issue of extraterritorially imposed sanctions on companies and nationals of other States. It called upon its Member States to remain undiscerned of such unilateral extraterritorial coercive

²⁰ Edward McWhinney, Q.C./United Nations General Assembly, “Declaration on the inadmissibility of intervention in the domestic affairs of states and the protection of their independence and sovereignty”, (December 21, 1965), accessed September 6, 2018, http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/ga/ga_2131-xx/ga_2131-xx_e.pdf

²¹ United Nations General Assembly, “Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion”, (New York: December 6, 1996), accessed September 5, 2018, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/51/ares51-22.htm>

²² United Nations General Assembly, „Further measures for the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly”, (New York: July 1, 2004), accessed September 4, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/58/316>

²³ United Nations General Assembly “A/RES/39/179, (New York: December 17, 1984), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/39/a39r179.htm>

²⁴ Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, “Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, n.d., accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.aalco.int/10-ET-GA%20brief2007.pdf>

²⁵ Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, “Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, n.d., accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.aalco.int/10-ET-GA%20brief2007.pdf>

²⁶ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

²⁷ United Nations, “Charter I: Purposes and Principles”, June 26, 1945, accessed September 5, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>

²⁸ International Court of Justice, “Case concerning military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua”, (June 27, 1986), accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/70/070-19860627-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf>

measures of legislative acts.²⁹ This resolution also led the Human Rights Council (HRC) to address the matter in 2007.³⁰ The council not only reiterated what had already been stated at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 - that unilateral economic measures create obstacles to trade relations among States and impedes the full realization of all human rights -³¹ but also voiced concerns in relation to coercive extraterritorial sanctions as mentioned above.

Empirical evidence obtained by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), who interviewed panellists from countries that had been targeted by practices of economic coercion, suggests a highly negative socioeconomic impact on the affected population.³² More importantly the panellists also reported that the sanctions affected the long-term growth process and the public welfare of their home countries. Following this the HRC emphasized the significance of a blockage of trade relations on the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development, which meant that these policies and sanctions also negatively affected the economic growth and opportunity of countries of the Global South.³³ This effect on developing countries is why ECOSOC has decided to become involved on the matter; as the hindrance of long-term growth and public welfare clearly fall into the charge of socioeconomic stability, given to the council.³⁴

²⁹ United Nations General Assembly, "Elimination of coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion", (New York: December 6, 1996), accessed September 5, 2018, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/51/22

³⁰ Rights Docs, "Human Rights and unilateral coercive measures", *United Nations Human Rights Council*, September 2007, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.right-docs.org/doc/a-hrc-res-6-7/>

³¹ Rights Docs, "Human Rights and unilateral coercive measures", *United Nations Human Rights Council*, September 2007, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.right-docs.org/doc/a-hrc-res-6-7/>

³² United Nations General Assembly, "Proceedings of the workshop on the impact of the application of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights by the affected populations, in particular their socioeconomic impact on women and children, in the States targeted", (New York: July 10, 2014), accessed September 6, 2018, <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/27/32>

³³ Economic and Social Council, "Question of the realization of the right to development", (November 7, 1997), accessed September 9, 2018, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G97/142/19/PDF/G9714219.pdf?OpenElement>

³⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council, "Promoting Sustainable Development", ECOSOC, accessed September 6, 2018, <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/promotion-du-développement-durable>

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Recent trends suggest that the use of targeted sanctions has been increasing, although broadly-defined trade embargoes still exist.³⁵ While many resolutions have criticized and helped in identifying the problem, the UN has yet to pass a resolution that effectively deals with the matter. Even though the GA is determined to continue to address the problem, the 59th session - following the decision to discuss the matter every three years - drew to an end without any conclusion.³⁶ Some of the broad sanctions originally imposed by individual Member States were even later on given the support of the Security Council (SC), acting under Charter VII, article 41, which gives the SC the ability to 'determine the existence of any threat to the peace'³⁷ and the right to impose either sanctions or take military action. Although the GA have addressed different areas of the issue, ECOSOC aims to improve the UNs effectiveness in dealing with these matters and evaluate how these techniques harm the state economy and overall growth, as well as taking into consideration the effect on a global scale.

ECOSOC'S TASK

When looking at the cases of Madagascar and Cuba, it becomes quite clear that both were severely impeded by economic coercive sanctions in their strife to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the council is tasked with the oversight of the realization of those goals, ECOSOC should consider evaluating the effect of extraterritorially imposed sanctions on the implementation of SDGs. In both given examples, it becomes quite clear, that the countries were unable to achieve the goals of decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9); while the sender state damaged the equality among countries (SDG 10) and the sovereignty of the target.³⁸

Not only should the committee, therefore, question the ability of any sender state to extraterritorially impact a country's economy, but also the long term effectiveness of such measures. In some cases, where embargoes were applied extraterritorially, even third parties were negatively affected in their businesses and investments.³⁹ If the true interest behind these sanctions and embargoes were the stabilization of democracy and the well-being of the people, ample historic evidence has proven these measures to be highly ineffective.⁴⁰ Despite the fact that sanctions have led to a diminished quality of life and a difficult re-entry into the global market due to a lack of ability to invest in new

³⁵ Secretary General, "Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries", (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

³⁶ Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization, "Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion, n.d.", accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.aalco.int/10-ET-GA%20brief2007.pdf>

³⁷ United Nations, "Chapter VII: Action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression", accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html>

³⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Sustainable Development Goals", *Sustainable Development knowledge platform*, accessed September 5, 2018, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

³⁹ Secretary General, "Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries", (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

⁴⁰ United Nations General Assembly, "Proceedings of the workshop on the impact of the application of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights by the affected populations, in particular their socioeconomic impact on women and children, in the States targeted", (New York: July 10, 2014), accessed September 6, 2018, <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/27/32>

infrastructure and technology; the government of Cuba has remained in power these last fifty years.⁴¹

Another issue to consider is the fact that the target nation is far from being the only one paying the price for these actions. Often the international community becomes affected, years after the sanctions were imposed. Out of the need to provide humanitarian aid or loans by the IMF, once the sanctions were lifted,⁴² the sender country is sometimes the one paying for rebuilding the economy and infrastructure they initially aimed to harm.⁴³

Of equal importance to identifying mistakes and problems is the proposal of solutions, or in this case the search for an alternative to broad sanctions. Here the African Union (AU) may serve as an example of a keener focus on political actions. It quite frequently “imposes sanctions on Member States when unconstitutional changes of government occur”.⁴⁴ These sanctions usually comprise a combination of political restrictions and more targeted economic options, as well as a close cooperation between the AU, UN and regional actors.⁴⁵

This policy ensures an improved synergy of domestic and international security. This has already been proven in the cases of Mali and Guinea-Bissau, where there was a great emphasis on a close cooperation with regional economic communities.⁴⁶ Another positive side-effect is that this ensures that the prevention of inner conflicts through diplomatic means is given precedence over an escalation through sanctions, which ultimately harm all sides. The most commonly used alternatives are so called targeted smart sanctions, which include financial restrictions, asset freezes and travel bans.⁴⁷ These limited sanctions could help with avoiding broad scale economic coercion in the future.

While the international community helped greatly in minimizing the number of military conflicts around the globe, economic measures are still regarded as morally acceptable and are practiced by nations until today.⁴⁸ To ensure the full implementation of the SDGs, as well as improving trade relations and the safe development of countries of the Global South, action must be taken by ECOSOC. The council, therefore, must find ways to dissuade countries more effectively from taking these measures; while also evaluating the economic dimensions and consequences of unilateral economic coercion against developing countries in order to guarantee an equal future for all Member States.

⁴¹ “Cuba country profile”, *BBC News*, May 1, 2018, accessed September 6, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-19583447>

⁴² Humanitarian Response, “2016-2017 Humanitarian strategic response plan, Madagascar *Grand Sud*, October 2016, accessed September 4, 2018, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/mcar_secheresse_prs_oct_2016-mai_2017_final_eng.pdf

⁴³ USAID, “Madagascar”, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.usaid.gov/crisis/madagascar>

⁴⁴ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

⁴⁵ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

⁴⁶ Secretary General, “Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries”, (July 16, 2015), accessed September 4, 2018, <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

⁴⁷ Gary Clyde Hufbauer, Barbara Oegg, “Targeted Sanctions: A Policy Alternative?”, *Peterson Institute for International Economics*, February 23, 2000, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/targeted-sanctions-policy-alternative>

⁴⁸ Eric B. Lorber, “Economic Coercion with a Chinese Twist”, *Foreign Policy*, February 28, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/02/28/economic-coercion-china-united-states-sanctions-asia/>

QUESTIONS DELEGATES SHOULD ADDRESS

Important questions every delegate should consider and answer in a position paper or resolution are:

- Are unilateral economic measures a threat to your trade relations and the freedom of trade? If so, how?
- Are broadly-defined trade embargoes and sanctions viable solutions for the future that should continue to be implemented? What are possible alternatives?
- Does unilateral economic coercion violate the SDGs and impede global development?
- What could the UN do to dissuade sender states from unilateral economic coercion?
- How could economic coercion be more easily identified and addressed?
- Should other councils and ECOSOC continue to address this matter?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Organigram UN entities, supervised by ECOSOC
http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/pdf/ecosoc_chart.pdf

Position of several countries regarding the topic as reported by the Secretary General
<http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55f283f64.pdf>

UNGA Resolution from 2014
<http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/teaxis/vtx/rwmain?docid=55f2837f4>

A good summary of measures undertaken by the UN regarding the topic
<http://www.aalco.int/10-ET-GA%20brief2007.pdf>

The Sustainable Development Goals
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=130>

WTO principles explained
https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/fact2_e.htm

A useful source for national policies and historic backgrounds
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

Great paper on different types of sanctions and their effects
<https://piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/targeted-sanctions-policy-alternative>

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TOPIC AREA B: FIGHTING RISING POPULATION IN THE ECONOMIC SOUTH AS A MECHANISM TO STRENGTHEN WOMEN RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

“The decision whether or not to bear a child is central to a woman’s life, to her well-being and dignity. It is a decision she must make for herself” – Ruth Bader ⁴⁹

HOW DOES RISING POPULATION HARM WOMEN?

Most prominently in third world countries, women are seen as the sole individuals responsible for the growth of children and little more than a means of continuation of the family genepool.⁵⁰ This is embodied in practices such as child marriage, humiliation of women that choose to use contraception or take abortions, and preventing women from accessing the workplace.⁵¹ All of which is orchestrated by the societies these women are born into. It is true that there are some women who choose the identity of being the sole caretaker of the child. Yet, there are also women who, are married at an age they cannot rationally consent in or those that want abortions, want to reject this imposition.⁵²

In direct contrast to this, developed countries (even developing countries in regions that have emphasized the importance of the identity of women) have strengthened women’s rights by creating more inclusion in the workplace and greater advocacy for abortion rights.⁵³ Yet, these measures can only be possible when these societies no longer force women to be preoccupied with their role in child growth.⁵⁴ In a world where women are to assume most of the responsibilities of child growth, the forced rise in population by third world societies can indicate that women are not given economic or political independence because of their entrenched gender role.⁵⁵ This is embodied in women not being allowed to participate in the workplace due to harassment or not being allowed to receive employment, which means they end up relying on the men of their households -- be it father or husband.⁵⁶ This ends up in toxic power imbalances in the family, which prevent women from making decision independently as they are reliant on the men funding their sustenance. Furthermore, this can indicate that women

⁴⁹ Olivia B, Waxman, “Ruth Bader wishes this case had legalized abortion instead of Roe vs Wade”, *Time*, August 2, 2018, accessed October 7, 2018, <http://time.com/5354490/ruth-bader-ginsburg-roe-v-wade/>

⁵⁰ Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

⁵¹ Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

⁵² Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

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⁵⁶ Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

cannot autonomously decide whether to get an abortion or a divorce.⁵⁷ Moreover, women's forced preoccupation with children means they are much less likely to be politically active and will not exercising their right to protest for issues they might be facing.

The aims of the committee will be to identify and solve problems of the marginalization of women due to their forced preoccupation with population growth in the less developed areas of the Global South. To those ends, the following societal issues highlighted should be further researched.

BACKGROUND AND PROBLEMS

LACK OF ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION

Around 214 million women in the world want to avoid pregnancy, but cannot do so because of they do not have access to contraception, according to the World Nations Population Fund.⁵⁸ With the increased population growth in the Global South, 26th countries in Africa will have doubled in population by 2050 according to the UN.⁵⁹ It has been seen that women who have access to contraception and family planning tend to have lesser unplanned pregnancies. However, there have been political and cultural reservations that prevent wide scale distribution and awareness of contraception. Furthermore, some countries do not divert funding into family planning methods and do not make information on contraception public knowledge.⁶⁰ This means vendors in smaller localities do not provide contraception to the population and procreation is seen as the only means to sexual release.

INFANT MORTALITY AND POOR BIRTHING CONDITIONS

Apart from those problems, there is the problem that women face during their pregnancy period. Poor maternal health is the leading cause of death and disability amongst women in the economic south.⁶¹ Contributing to this problem is the lack of medical facilities present; almost half the births in the developing world take place without proper medical personnel. Due to this, there are over half a million women who die when giving birth every year in regions of Africa and Asia, which is one woman per minute. While the number of deaths is a very high number, there are twenty to thirty women who suffer from serious injury or disability for every one that dies during the pregnancy/child birth process. This is one of the biggest violations of the most basic

⁵⁷ Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

⁵⁸ Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

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⁶⁰ Seema Jayachandran, The roots of gender inequality, *Annual Review of Economics*, February 20, 2015, accessed on 7th October ,2018, http://faculty.wcas.northwestern.edu/~sjv340/roots_of_gender_inequality.pdf

⁶¹ United Nations Population Fund, "Keeping Promises to Women Benefits all", *UNFPA*, 2 July 2002, Accessed on 7th October, 2018, <https://www.unfpa.org/press/high-level-segment-ecosoc-keeping-promise-women-benefits-all>

right to life.⁶² In addition to this, a number of women who give birth in the economic south are too young to be doing so because it may be considered an “obligation” they have to their family.⁶³ In such cases, they lack knowledge, which leads to women having pregnancies too soon, too close together or too late.⁶⁴

STIGMATIZING OF ABORTIONS

Societies in the economic south have historically shown huge political and cultural opposition to the right to abortion; ignoring the plight of women that may get pregnant due to rape or not knowing of the possibility of intercourse without procreation.⁶⁵ In 2008, around 86 million women⁶⁶ had unexpected pregnancies, which affected women on certain factors. Those who do happen to have abortions are ostracized by certain governments and also face societal backlash for making a decision that has to do with their own body autonomy.⁶⁷

Furthermore, having a child too early in a woman’s life is problematic because it deprives them of good education and employment, which in turn are key determinants of women empowerment. When women stay in school longer and shift their focus on their careers, they usually have less children than if they did not.⁶⁸ Having less children and controlling when to have their children leads them to improve their health and the health of their children as well.⁶⁹

WORKPLACE ISSUES

Even though women comprise of 50 percent of the world’s population, they consist of 70 percent of the poor. Apart from the employment opportunities and basic rights quite often women are culturally made to give up their own individuality to have and take

⁶² United Nations Population Fund, “Keeping Promises to Women Benefits all”, *UNFPA*, 2 July 2002, Accessed on 7th October, 2018, <https://www.unfpa.org/press/high-level-segment-ecosoc-keeping-promise-women-benefits-all>

⁶³ United Nations Population Fund, “Keeping Promises to Women Benefits all”, *UNFPA*, 2 July 2002, Accessed on 7th October, 2018, <https://www.unfpa.org/press/high-level-segment-ecosoc-keeping-promise-women-benefits-all>

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⁶⁵ Center for Reproductive Rights, Safe and Legal Abortion is a Woman’s right, *CFPR*, October 2011, accessed on 7th October, 2018.

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⁶⁶ Center for Reproductive Rights, Safe and Legal Abortion is a Woman’s right, *CFPR*, October 2011, accessed on 7th October, 2018.

<https://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/crr.civicactions.net/files/documents/Safe%20and%20Legal%20Abortion%20is%20a%20Womans%20Human%20Right.pdf>

⁶⁷ Center for Reproductive Rights, Safe and Legal Abortion is Center for Reproductive Rights, Safe and Legal Abortion is a Woman’s right, *CFPR*, October 2011, accessed on 7th October, 2018.

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care of children.⁷⁰ Gender gaps favour men more in the economic south than the economic north in education, health, personal autonomy etc.⁷¹ Since boys are seen as the bread winners of the family, a lot more priority is given to them when it comes to education.⁷²

Even within the middle-income families in the economic south, the male usually receives the better education while the female is sometimes stripped of her right to education just so they can pay for the other male sibling's education.⁷³ This obviously has repercussions for a female's growth.⁷⁴ In employment, men are more likely to be working than women are. In India, men are three times more likely to work than females. Females are also underrepresented in the Middle East and some African countries.⁷⁵ In developing countries, unemployment rates are usually high and women are not considered "fit enough" to work.⁷⁶

Even if a woman receives access to education and employment, she still faces certain challenges such as maternity leaves in the workplace. This issue is a prevalent one within the economic south, where maternity leaves are almost non-existent.⁷⁷ In developing countries, women serve as the backbone of the agriculture industry as they contribute to approximately 60 – 80 percent of the food production.⁷⁸ Even though women are the ones who significantly contribute, they do suffer from the problem of food scarcity more.⁷⁹ Men are usually prioritized in the division of food within the poorer households and even independent female farmers are neglected because they are not provided the resources required to be as successful as their male counterparts.⁸⁰ This is due to food and resource scarcity, which is caused by over-population within these

⁷⁰ Robert Townsend, "Furthering women's rights in developing countries", ODUMUNC, 2014, accessed on 7th October, 2018,

<https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/mun/2014/ecosoc/ecosoc-furthering-womens-rights-in-dcs.pdf>

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⁷⁷ World Economic Forum, "5 problems, one solution: Women, *Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment*, March 2013, accessed on 7th October 2018, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC_WomensEmpowerment_FiveChallengesOneSolution_Compndium_2013.pdf

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regions.⁸¹ The problems that women face are not restricted to only these issues, more research should be able to cover more issues in regards to the topic.

⁸¹World Economic Forum, "5 problems, one solution: Women, *Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment*, March 2013, accessed on 7th October 2018, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC_WomensEmpowerment_FiveChallengesOneSolution_Compendium_2013.pdf

HISTORY WITHIN THE UN

A new paradigm occurred in addressing human reproduction and women's health in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). It had a clear focus on the empowerment of women. It had sub-parts of the issues addressed, the most important being the Women's Convention and the Health Related Rights under the Women's Convention ⁸²

The international bill for women is: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,⁸³ which was adopted by the GA in 1979. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women⁸⁴ is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Described as an international bill of rights for women, it was instituted on 3 September 1981 and has been ratified by 189 states. Over fifty countries who have ratified the Convention have done so subject to certain declarations, reservations, and objections; including 38 countries who rejected the enforcement article 29, which addresses means of settlement for disputes concerning the interpretation or application of the Convention

ECOSOC has had a few resolutions that have taken place with respect to women's rights, one of the more important being Resolution 2010/29, titled *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective Into All Policies and Programs in the UN system*. This notably requested the United Nations system to support Member States, upon their request, in the implementation of national policies that increase gender equality. ⁸⁵

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/65/187 discusses the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women. It recognized that violence against women was rooted in unequal power relations between men and women and that all forms of violence against women constituted a major impediment to the ability of women to make use of their capabilities. These power relations are quite often present due to the burden of child care-taking being disproportionately on the woman often preventing them from gaining financial independence to be able to escape abuse as discussed before in the guide.⁸⁶

General Assembly Resolution A/RES/1763 (XVII) discussed the Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and the Registration for Marriages in 1962. This is an

⁸²UN, United Nations Commission on Status of Women, *UN library*, September 2018, Accessed on 6th October, 2018, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/shalev.htm>

⁸³ UN, United Nations Commission on Status of Women, *UN library*, September 2018, Accessed on 6th October, 2018, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/shalev.htm>

⁸⁴ UN, United Nations Commission on Status of Women, *UN library*, September 2018, Accessed on 6th October, 2018, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/shalev.htm>

⁸⁵ Robert Townsend, "Furthering women's rights in developing countries", *ODUMUNC, 2014*, accessed on 7th October, 2018,

<https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/mun/2014/ecosoc/ecosoc-furthering-womens-rights-in-dcs.pdf>

⁸⁶ Robert Townsend, "Furthering women's rights in developing countries", *ODUMUNC, 2014*, accessed on 7th October, 2018,

<https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/mun/2014/ecosoc/ecosoc-furthering-womens-rights-in-dcs.pdf>

important step towards stopping child marriage and preventing young girls from being burdened with the huge responsibility of child-bearing⁸⁷

There are multiple resolutions that have been passed by Commission of the Status of Women, which is a functional commission of ECOSOC and by UN WOMEN addressing the topic area at hand. Such as the fifty third session of the CSW that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 2 to 13 March 2009 with the priority theme of the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS.

In 1979, the Convention for the Elimination for all forms of Discrimination against Women was signed and ratified. This convention defines discrimination against women as "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field."

SITUATION TODAY

Although the United Nations has discussed these issues with relative urgency, they have focused more on the country's individual efforts to fight the problem and to implement these policies in their own countries. It is of the utmost importance if change is to be accelerated.

Some countries like the United States have had reservations in advancing the cause of population growth stabilization. It has argued it to be 'coercive' and that family size should be decided by individual families.⁸⁸ While others like India have taken the easier but more harmful way out. For example, in the last decade there have been aggressive sterilization campaigns, mainly targeting men, and these have stigmatized family planning ever since. India is forecast to become the world's most populous country in 2030, up from 1.25 billion today to nearly 1.5 billion. Teaching poorly educated women in remote communities how to use pills or contraceptives is more expensive than the mass sterilization campaigns, and despite successive years of economic growth, governments have systematically chosen the cheaper option.⁸⁹ Hence, not only are some countries unwilling to work on population control but even some of those that are tend to do so with short-term goals and little resources. The consequence of all this has been the pernicious harms to women discuss in the guide above.

⁸⁷ UN, Women and Gender equality, *Research Guides*, September 2018, accessed on 7th October, 2018, <http://libraryresources.unog.ch/c.php?g=462669&p=3162723>

⁸⁸ US Department of State, "Population", *Diplomacy in action*, 2018, accessed on 7th October 2018, <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/population/>

⁸⁹ Jason Burke, "India's population policies , including female sterilisation", *The Guardian* ,13 November 2013, Accessed on 7th October 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/13/india-population-growth-policy-problems-sterilisation-incentives-coercion>

ECOSOC is one of many bodies that is working towards ensuring the elimination of discrimination, accountability is one thing that in cooperation with other countries that can be worked upon by the UN. Since UN Women representatives are elected by ECOSOC, it is important to further strengthen the relatively new body of UN Women in order to achieve their goals. As discussed previously, ECOSOC has passed certain resolutions in order to achieve betterment of women and while has received significant progress, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

QUESTIONS DELEGATES SHOULD ANSWER

- What are your country's beliefs on population growth and is it even considered a problem?
- Does your country consider over population and having an access of children as a violation of women's rights?
- What are the harms to women and to society with respect to having women who don't have education or employment?
- Does society have acceptability to abortion? If no, how can we change that narrative?
- What are the feasible solutions to the problems identified?
- How can we incentivize countries to act upon the advice provided by the UN?

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