KALINGA INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY (KIIT)
Deemed to be University
(Established U/S 3 of UGC Act, 1956)
Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

KSAC

KIIT INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

KIIT INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2018

28th-30th SEPTEMBER

ECOSOC
United Nations

STUDY GUIDE

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It is an honour to preside over the ECOSOC at KIIT MUN'18. This letter shall also serve as a concept note for the committee and our expectations from the committee are to function. MUN's as a concept is designed to be a simulation more than a conference. This difference is inherent and more obvious in each country's representation through their delegation. The head of this delegation is usually a diplomat who is firstly representing the government and its goals and is hence tasked with the responsibility of indulging other countries into their own goals and using diplomacy effectively into use to achieve the aforementioned goals. The end of the simulation then is different for each diplomat and it is the means to that end that shall define the quality of the simulation. Apart from the simulation part, it is important to remember the inherent limitations of every student in terms of using or applying international law or such. This then implies that it is <u>not</u> necessary to indulge in highly technical discussions that ensure no learning to the delegate, it is rather imperative that all discussions be integrated with the logic that has been graciously been gifted to mankind through our collective wisdom. It is thus expected that this concept note also serves as a very important start point to the simulation and the delegates are able to infer a lot more than what is shown as face value.

The agenda has multiple facets and can take a national or international viewpoint. For the benefit of the delegates and the quality of the simulation, the background guide shall give small introductions and an important start-point to your research. It is important to remember although this has been emphasized all throughout your MUN careers, this is only a start point and this is just a quick start to your research while the end awaits you all.

Godspeed.

All the best everyone.
Siddharth Kapoor - Chairperson
Nilesh Agarwal - Vice-Chairperson

Introduction to the Committee:

Chapter X of the Charter of the United Nations established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as a founding body and one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). ECOSOC indirectly oversees almost 70% of UN resources through its oversight of 14 Specialized Agencies and thirteen functional and regional commissions. In 2013, ECOSOC underwent a series of reforms which attempted to expand its functions andpowers as:

- **A leadership forum for policy dialogue and recommendations;**
- **The lead entity to address new and emerging challenges;**
- **A forum for the balanced integration of sustainable development;**
- **An accountability platform for universal commitments, monitoring and reporting on progress at all levels**

The Council is mandated to serve as the main body for policy dialogue; review and advise Member States andother UN entities on economic, social, cultural, educational, and health-related topics; as well as lead discussionon the implementation of the international development framework. In the last decade, the General Assembly through resolutions 61/16 of 9 January 2007 and 68/1 of 13 December 2013 strengthened the working methods of the Council. The latter recognized the leading role of the Council in "identifying emergingchallenges and promoting reflection, debate and innovative thinking on development, as well as in achieving abalanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development."

History

In the 1960s and 1970s, the number of subsidiary bodies of ECOSOC increased significantly due to the influence of developing countries that broadened the agenda of the UN. This group of Member States called fora stronger focus on urgent issues such as the elimination of underdevelopment, poverty, and the unequal position of their countries in the world economy. Following this, the General Assembly adopted resolution32/197 of 1977, on the "Restructuring of economic and social sectors of the United Nations System," which was the first attempt to make ECOSOC more effective through better coordination between ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. During that time, the Council also experienced changes in its membership. It originally had 18 members, increasing to 27 on 31 August 1965 under the GA resolution 1991B (XVIII). In 1971, the membership was expanded again under the GA resolution 2847/XXVI and currently is 54 Member States. In the mid-1990s, the UN system faced significant duplication of work due to unclear mandates and overlapping operational activities of its various entities.

Mandate

The Economic and Social Council's mandate is articulated in the Charter of the United Nations (1945) as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters and may make recommendations with respect to any such matters to the General Assembly to the Members of the United Nations, and to the specialized agencies concerned. It may make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all."

The Council fulfils its mandate under the overall authority of the General Assembly, and with the consultation of a broad range of civil society actors and in conjunction with the work completed by its subsidiary bodies.

Such reform placed ECOSOC as a leading body in fostering cooperation among Member States towards sustainable development, and the General Assembly identified further ways to place ECOSOC as an action-oriented and effective coordinator of the UN system-wide international development agenda under the resolution 68/1(2013). In particular, the resolution requested ECOSOC to prioritize thematic sessions such asthe humanitarian segment; to regularly hold management and coordination meetings with the key stakeholders, and promote dialogue on financing for international development.

Functions and Powers

The Charter of the United Nations indicates that ECOSOC "may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, and educational, health, and related matters and may make recommendations with respect to any matters to the General Assembly [GA], to the Members of the United Nations, and to Specialized Agencies concerned." It "may furnish information to the Security Council and shall assist [it] upon request."

In addition to this, the Council serves a critical role in providing coordination, monitoring and advice to the UN programs agencies, and funds on international development policies and their implementation. In particular, it monitors and evaluates the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of UN operational activities for development, a policy mechanism, which was created under the GA landmark resolution 67/226 of 2013. Other functions of the Council entail: encouraging Member States to implement relevant policies; providing financial resources; cooperating with relevant actors; mainstreaming and integrating good practice policy at a national level; strengthening national level responses and capacity on a certain issue; sharing information and good practice; appointing a national focal point; and providing support and better coordination with relevant entities of the UN system.

The Council's functions and powers were further expanded with the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 68/1 in 2013 which mandated the body to provide leadership to the UN system through adoption of an annual theme; organize thematic segments of the Council throughout the year; and convene an Integration Segment to monitor and promote the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the Council. ECOSOC regularly requests the Secretary-General to follow-up on certain issues, and provide more concrete, formal support as well as the resources necessary from within the budget of a regional or functional commission to carry out certain activities.

The programmatic cycle of ECOSOC includes

- **High-Level Segment**

- **High-Level Political Forum (HLPF),provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, follow-up and review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments;**
- **Annual Ministerial Review (AMR),held annually since 2007, assesses progress in the implementation of the United Nations development agenda;**
- **Development Cooperation Forum (DCF), held on a biannual basis since 2007, reviews trends and progress in development cooperation on a biannual basis.**
- **Integration Segment, held annually since 2014, promotes the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development both within the United Nations system and beyond.**
- **Humanitarian Affairs Segment, that takes place in alternate years in New York and Geneva, seeks to strengthen the coordination of the United Nations' humanitarian efforts.**
- **Operational Activities for Development Segment, held annually, provides overall coordination and guidance for United Nations funds and programmes on a system-wide basis and many more.**

How to read the guide

The agenda has two parts which need to be understood in the abstract as well as mutually. The guide touches upon the first part in detail while the three documents attached herewith explain the role of the sub bodies of the UNECOSOC. The second part is focussed on negotiations and solution-oriented discussions which must be dealt with on a subjective level while addressing various issues in all respects. The links provided for further reading on both the parts of the agenda are important sources which will help to build your understanding and research on them. The guide should be read with this document as the base of research as well as the research links. The second part should be read afterwards and the linking of the two guides will form the analysis the delegates should do while researching the agenda. In case of queries, please reach out at:

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Part 1: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies- the contribution of functional commissions

Introduction to the agenda

Emerging recognition of two fundamental errors underpinning past polices for natural resource issues heralds awareness of the need for a worldwide fundamental change in thinking and in the practice of environmental management. The first error has been an implicit assumption that ecosystem responses to human use are linear, predictable and controllable. The second has been an assumption that human and natural systems can be treated independently. However, evidence that has been accumulating in diverse regions all over the world suggests that natural and social systems behave in nonlinear ways, exhibit marked thresholds in their dynamics, and that social-ecological systems act as strongly coupled, complex and evolving integrated systems.

We use the concept of resilience—the capacity to buffer change, learn and develop— as a framework for understanding how to sustain and enhance adaptive capacity in a complex world of rapid transformations. Two useful tools for resilience-building in social-ecological systems are structured scenarios and active adaptive management. These tools require and facilitate a social context with flexible and open institutions and multi-level governance systems that allow for learning and increase adaptive capacity without foreclosing future development options.
Resilient societies are a concept that has become increasingly relevant in the face of increasing natural as well as manmade disasters. The concept of resilience can be adopted by policy making as a new interdisciplinary approach enabling differing dimensions of societal development to link up with each other. The concept of resilient society in particular is a pragmatic way leading necessarily to a more closely cooperating national and international community, since most of its "ingredients" may only be activated across borders.
Resilience can be defined in many ways. It is the buffer capacity or the ability of a system to absorb perturbations, or the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before a system changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behaviour. By contrast other definitions of resilience emphasize the speed of recovery from a disturbance, highlighting the difference between resilience and resistance, where the latter is the extent to which disturbance is actually translated into impact. It is argued by many ecologists that resilience is the key to biodiversity conservation and that diversity itself enhances resilience, stability and ecosystem functioning (Schulze and Mooney, 1993; Mooney and Ehrlich, 1997; Tilman 1997). Ecological economists also argue that resilience is the key to sustainability in the wider sense (e.g., Common, 1995). Certainly resilience is related to stability, but it is not clear whether this characteristic is always desirable, for example, in evolutionary terms.
Resilience, for social-ecological systems, is related to the magnitude of shock that the system can absorb and remain within a given state; the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization; and the degree to which the system can build capacity for learning and adaptation. Management can destroy or build resilience, depending on how the social-ecological system organizes itself in response to management actions.
More resilient social-ecological systems are able to absorb larger shocks without changing in fundamental ways. When the massive transformation is inevitable, resilient systems contain the components needed for renewal and reorganization. In other words, they can cope, adapt, or reorganize without sacrificing the provision of ecosystem services. Resilience is often associated with diversity—of species, of human opportunity, and of economic options—that maintains and

encourages both adaptation and learning. In general, resilience derives from things that can be restored only slowly, such as reservoirs of soil nutrients, heterogeneity of ecosystems on a landscape, or a variety of genotypes and species.

Social-ecological systems are constantly changing. Usually one assumes that ecosystems respond to gradual change in a smooth way, but sometimes there are drastic shifts. Regime shifts are known for many ecosystems and these shifts can be difficult, expensive, or sometimes impossible to reverse. Although we understand the ecological regime shifts retrospectively, it is difficult to predict them in advance. Measurements or predictions of thresholds typically have low precision, and often ecological thresholds move over time. It is difficult to design assessment programs that learn as fast as thresholds change.

One approach to the ongoing change of social-ecological systems has been the attempt to control or canalize change. Paradoxically, management that uses rigid control mechanisms to harden the condition of social-ecological systems can erode resilience and promote collapse. There are many examples of management that suppressed natural disturbance regimes or altered slowly-changing ecological variables, leading to disastrous changes in soils, waters, landscape configurations or biodiversity that did not appear until long after the ecosystems were first managed. Similarly, governance can disrupt social memory or remove mechanisms for creative, adaptive response by people, in ways that lead to the breakdown of social-ecological systems.

In contrast, management that builds resilience can sustain social-ecological systems in the face of surprise, unpredictability, and complexity. Resilience-building management is flexible and open to learning. It attends to slowly-changing, fundamental variables that create memory, legacy, diversity, and the capacity to innovate in both social and ecological components of the system.It also conserves and nurtures the diverse elements that are necessary to reorganize and adapt to the novel, unexpected, and transformative circumstances. Thus, it increases the range of surprises with which a socioeconomic system can cope

BASIC CONCEPTS

Ecological and Sociological Resilience

Social resilience is an important component of the circumstances under which individuals and social groups adapt to environmental change. Ecological and social resilience may be linked through the dependence on ecosystems of communities and their economic activities. The question is, then, whether societies dependent on resources and ecosystems are themselves less resilient. In addition, this analysis allows consideration of whether institutions themselves are resilient to change. Institutions in this case are defined in the broadest sense to include habitualised behaviour and rules and norms that govern society, as well as the more usual notion of formal institutions with memberships, constituencies and stakeholders. This broad definition is important because institutional structures such as property rights, govern the use of natural resources creating incentives for sustainable or unsustainable use. Hence they are a central component linking social and ecological resilience. Market liberalization and the privatization of natural resources in most cases reduce ecosystem as well as social resilience. This loss of resilience is associated with negative impacts on livelihoods and, in the context of the institutions of common property management, collective institutional resilience is also undermined. There is a long history of examining the resilience of ecological systems and their persistence in the face of human intervention. Evidence on the history of human use of ecosystems suggests an inevitable decline in ecosystem resilience with technological lock-in and reductions in diversity (Holling and Sanderson, 1996).

Yet the concept of resilience has not effectively been brought across the disciplinary divide to examine the meaning of resilience of a community or a society as a whole. Is resilience a relevant term for describing communities? Is there a link between social resilience and ecological resilience? And do institutions exhibit resilience? In addition to these issues, the concept of resilience is clearly related to other configurations of environment society relationships such as vulnerability and criticality, some of which have an explicit spatial dimension to these social processes. Analysis of vulnerability as a social phenomenon also has a long tradition within cultural geography and the critical questions of food security and famine (Watts and Bohle, 1993).

Social vulnerability is the exposure of groups of people or individuals to stress as a result of the impacts of environmental change. Stress, in the social sense, encompasses disruption to groups' or individuals' livelihoods and forced adaptation to the changing physical environment. Social vulnerability in general encompasses disruption to livelihoods and loss of security. For vulnerable groups such stresses are often pervasive and related to the underlying economic and social situation, both of lack of income and resources, but also to war, civil strife and other factors (see Chambers, 1989). For natural ecosystems, the vulnerability can occur when individuals or communities of species are stressed, and where thresholds of potentially irreversible changes are experienced through environmental changes. Social vulnerability to environmental change and other causes of vulnerability can be observed at different scales and in relation to a range of phenomena such as human-induced risks or natural hazards (Klein et al., 1998; Adger, 1999). Resilience increases the capacity to cope with stress and is hence a loose antonym for vulnerability.

Disaster Risk

Disaster risk is commonly understood as the result of an interaction between so-called "natural" hazards and vulnerability (UNISDR, 2009). "Disaster risk" therefore refers to a comprehensive understanding of risk related to climatic and non-climatic hazards, affecting lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services (UNISDR, 2009). Climate change plays an important role in Disaster Risk, in that it exacerbates vulnerabilities, hazards, and consequently future disasters. Changes will be strongly felt through the water cycle (IPCC, 2013), underlining the important role of good water governance and management. Recent events such as Typhoon Haiyan (also known as Yolanda) in the Philippines, Hurricane Sandy in New York, the Japanese tsunami of 2011 and floods in central Europe during 2013 illustrate that disasters are a global phenomenon which has not yet been sufficiently addressed in low, middle or high income countries. The worldwide rate of disasters has almost quadrupled in the last 30 years, resulting in escalating human and economic losses (UNISDR, 2012), not from the increase of "natural hazards" but from the increase of vulnerability (UNISDR, 2009). This connection is seldom articulated in the media where the debate over disasters most often wrongly emphasises the "natural" hazard triggering the disaster. The identified increase in societies' vulnerability is often caused by "risk blindness" apparent in rapid short term economic development, and in part, overconfidence in physical/structural security measures. As such, vulnerability and resultant disasters are often a sign of persistent development problems caused by unsustainable economic and social processes and ill-adapted societies (Lavell & Maskrey, 2013). Over the last decade, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) has gained significant recognition as an effective approach to systematically identify, assess and reduce disaster risk. While original DRR approaches mainly addressed large scale rapid-onset natural disasters, the field has become increasingly comprehensive and inclusive of many anthropogenic drivers. This is in line with an increasingly global debate on the need to build resilience to a multi-risk environment, including small scale and slow-onset disasters, violent conflict, uncontrolled urbanisation, rising consumption, environmental degradation and climate change. These global challenges are combined with economic and social fragility, inequality and high levels of poverty which often mutually reinforce each other.

In recent years, important steps towards a more integral and comprehensive approach to DRR have been taken, most notably through the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Most disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts still focus on reduction or compensation of existing disaster losses and damage, but there is a growing interest in addressing the underlying drivers of risk and "building resilience" – enabling people to anticipate, adapt to and learn from changes, disruptions and disasters that may harm them.

Role of culture in building resilience

A traditional Norwegian definition of culture is like this:

The sum of experience and insight that have been laid down through the time in faith, common practice, art, poetry, science, technology and institutions. (Folkeskolekomiteen 1963:113. Authors translation).

This definition can be said to represent an essentialist understanding of culture. It emphasises that culture is condensed human experience and insight; it is a set of values, ideas and norms that are expressed in vital cultural categories. This set of ideas is what the primary schools according to this definition should try to transfer to the next generation. The process-oriented understanding of culture puts greater emphasis on the dynamic aspect of culture. Sally Engle Merry explains it in this way:

This is a concept of culture that allows for agency and contestation in situations with multiple and contradictory cultural logics and systems of meaning. These conceptions move us away from seeing cultures as homogeneous entities to imagining them as arenas of contest among competing for cultural logics, in which variously situated actors seize and appropriate cultural practices. The location of culture is no longer a fixed geographical space, but is constituted in multiple locations reflecting the movement of peoples, capital and symbolic systems (Merry 2001:45).

Here, Merry points out how culture is a dynamic and changing field, a contest where different values, ideas, ways of living etc. compete to take the lead.

Hylland Eriksen seems to try to mediate between the two views when he says:

Culture is what makes communication possible; consequently culture is the patterns of thinking, habits and experiences that human beings share and that make it possible to understand each other (Hylland Eriksen 2001:60, author's translation).

Hylland Eriksen continues to point out that the essentialist definition is rooted in history and tradition as an important part of a culture; culture as related to the concept of roots. Culture is a fellowship in fate and history; it is the condensed wisdom of previous generations. It is our heritage.

The second definition is concentrated on the present tense and the opportunities for mutual understanding. It underlines that culture is dynamic and changing, and it is directed more towards the future than the past. The past cannot, according to this view, guide us in future choices; a new age deserves new solutions.

A full understanding of culture and cultural processes requires both the historic-traditional and the dynamic perspective. Culture comprises the values, norms, rules and ways of life that we get from the generations before us *and* how every new generation interprets and adapts these to their own lives and society.

Resilience is the capability of systems and individuals to cope with significant adversity or risk. As natural disasters and wars rip apart societies, and as large-scale modernization projects, urbanization, and transnational migration bring about sudden dislocations, the endurance of cultural beliefs, values, practices, and knowledge, and their transmission across generations have become significant concerns. Projects carried out by UNESCO in Haiti, for example, have found that the vibrant local culture plays an important part in rebuilding a sense of community after disasters and is a key asset during the difficult process of rebuilding.

But culture is also an important resource in reducing disaster risks, before the associated hazards have happened. A well maintained historic environment, including built heritage and cultural landscapes, is likely to be very resilient to natural phenomena such as earthquakes or extreme weather events, because it incorporates traditional knowledge accumulated over centuries of adaptation to the environment. In 2009, a great number of traditional buildings managed to

stand a terrible earthquake in Kashmir, saving the lives of their inhabitants, while conversely, reinforced concrete buildings which were badly constructed collapsed completely in the same affected areas, killing everyone inside.
When integrated into modern disaster risk management schemes, traditional management techniques have proven to be efficient and cost-effective tools to mitigate environmental risks and reduce vulnerability.

Culture and Regeneration

There have been many striking examples of regeneration projects that have been defined by a powerful, ambitious cultural component. Culture has been used to redefine a city, transforming 'the brand'. Streets, neighbourhoods, whole towns and cities have been renewed. The grand design, the centrepiece that serves as both a powerful symbol of virility and the catalyst of real change by reviving civic pride and attracting inward investment, has been an integral element in the most successful transformative regeneration schemes in recent memory. All regeneration projects start somewhere. A disused industrial site can remain derelict for years, a deprived neighbourhood forgot and left to decay. Maybe the task of regeneration is seen as just too big, too expensive, too difficult. Maybe the ideas, the political will, the courage to act is just not there. It needs a spark, a catalyst, that new factor that injects energy into the mix, bringing impetus to the project. It might be an external factor – a national or international competition like a 'Capital of Culture' or a new national funding pot

Once the fuse is ignited, a regeneration scheme, especially one that has at its core a cultural element, needs a compelling vision to succeed. Ambition, passion, even a little romance are all-important. But to be compelling, the vision must also be understandable, viable, and sellable. It should present a journey, an adventure that people want to go on. To attract support – from investors, decision makers and local people – the vision should excite but also offer reassurance and be inclusive and responsive to the local populace. Sharing and consulting on the vision is crucial both to bring people on board but also to bring greater definition, colour and depth to the vision. Dundee's authorities developed a draft master plan for the Waterfront project which they consulted on extensively with the community, refining and revising the proposals before developing the final plans for the regeneration programme. Culture can – must – play a critical role in the vision, providing an anchor for a development that becomes the standout expression of the big idea. It might be an iconic architectural statement, a piece of public art, a park, a venue offering new spaces for local people to participate with the arts and with taheir communities, or something more subtle that nevertheless brings people together and defines a sense of place.

International Actions for building resilience

Hyogo Framework for Action

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA): Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters has been the first plan to explain, describe and detail the work that is required from all different sectors and actors to reduce disaster losses. It was developed and agreed on with the many partners needed to reduce disaster risk – governments, international agencies, disaster experts and many others – bringing them into a common system of coordination. The HFA outlines five priorities for action, and offers guiding principles and practical means for achieving disaster resilience. Its goal was to substantially reduce disaster losses by 2015 by building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. This means reducing the loss of lives and social, economic, and environmental assets when hazards strike.

Sendai Framework

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks: (i) Understanding disaster risk; (ii) Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; (iii) Investing in disaster reduction for resilience and; (iv) Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.It aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries over the next 15 years.

The Framework was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015

Rio+20

As the world prepares for Rio+20, the focus is on environmental sustainability and green economies, a more efficient institutional framework for sustainable development and its seven priorities areas: jobs, energy, cities, food, water, oceans and disasters. These are the key words which will drive the agenda and shape the outcomes of this landmark meeting.

Although culture does not feature as an explicit theme of the Conference, its essential role in fostering sustainable development is being increasingly recognised. We are all familiar with the intrinsic value of culture as a repository of symbols and identity. But many are also becoming aware of the powerful contribution culture can make to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development, and indeed to each one of the key priority areas listed above.

Conclusion

Partnerships are integral to success. Local and national agencies, charities and businesses need to bring together to make a reality of the vision. Trust is critical here; partners need to know what they are buying into. They need to know that support – especially government support – is secure. This can often be best expressed through long-term funding commitments, but governance arrangements are also important here to build confidence and make clear roles and responsibilities and how to access/ influence decisions. Sometimes just a gesture from the government is needed: seed funding to undertake the planning and impact assessments of a proposed scheme can unlock the doors of other investors and benefactors.

Part 2: High-Level Policy Dialogue including international financial and trade institutions on sustainable development and development growth

Introduction to the agenda:

The thematic review for the 2017 HLPF took up the first theme: "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" identified by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in its resolution 70/299 of July 2016 on follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the global level. ECOSOC will host its High-level Segment in July 2018; it will discuss the main theme for its 2018 session, *which was selected to align with the HLPF theme*. The main theme for the 2018 ECOSOC session is: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". And the sets of Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth shall be Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15.

The 2nd part of the agenda does not focus on the errors (if any) in the past or the important technical attributes of resilience but rather focus on the wide implementation of the SDGs through the required channels, procurement of resources and the roles that the global community needs to fulfil. Furthermore, the SDGs to be reviewed in the 2018 session include some very vital targets like:

- **Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**
- **Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**
- **Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**
- **Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**
- **Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**
- **Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, which will be considered each year.**

Key Terms and Events:

- **Voluntary National Reviews:**

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven" (paragraph 79). These national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum (HLPF), meeting under the auspices of ECOSOC. As stipulated in paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, regular reviews by the HLPF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and shall provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.
The voluntary national reviews (VNRs) aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The VNR countries are expected to submit comprehensive written reports that will be made available in the VNR database. In addition, each VNR country will also provide main messages summarizing their key findings. VNR presentations would need to show that:

- **local government has been engaged in implementation, and that this engagement is yielding results for citizens, especially those most in need of concrete changes to their daily lives;**
- **coordination and integration are being ensured across ministries within national governments;**
- **public awareness of the SDGs is growing, leading to stronger stakeholder mobilization; and**
- **Governments' capacity to collect and analyze data is beginning to rise to meet the challenge of reporting on the SDGs' targets and indicators.**

The VNR reports form an integral part of the High Level Segment. In 2018, the 46 countries below will be conducting voluntary national reviews at the HLPF. For more details, please click here.

- **Ministerial Declaration**

As agreed in UNGA Resolution 70/299, HLPF sessions under the auspices of ECOSOC shall result in a negotiated ministerial declaration for inclusion in the Council's report to the UNGA. The HLPF is expected to adopt this year's joint Ministerial Declaration as well, followed by its adoption in the ECOSOC High-level Segment.
In 2017, a zero draft was released on 7 June by the co-facilitators, Jan Kickert, Permanent Representative of Austria, and Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica. By the draft, UN Member States would highlight the need for accelerated implementation. They would also:

- **Call for attention to leveraging synergies and co-benefits, while avoiding or minimizing goal conflicts and trade-offs;**
- **Call on the UN to establish an interagency task force, guided by ECOSOC, to provide policy guidance "towards national efforts to enhance policy integration" for achieving the SDGs;**

- **Encourage amplifying the poverty-reducing impact of actions taken to achieve other SDGs, such as those related to growth, energy, infrastructure and inequality;**
- **Encourage measures to strengthen institutions serving people affected by conflict, fragility and forced migration;**
- **Stress the need for improved and coordinated collection, analysis, dissemination and use of statistics and disaggregated data, and highlight the need to build capacity for producing, analyzing and using data;**
- **Highlight the importance of localizing and communicating the SDGs, including at the national and community, grassroots levels; and**
- **Note the importance of ensuring that the UN is fit for purpose, and encourage the UN development system to improve collaboration in delivering collective results for the realization of the 2030 Agenda.**

This is specific to the theme and SDGs being discussed, such a draft is vitally important to move forward the whole Agenda 2030 framework. These are the broad tasks with systematic thematic-oriented discussions that the delegates will be expected to indulge in. Moreover, there are some very key aspects which we must take note of in this part if the committee chooses to address it.

Aligning the Financial System with Sustainable Development

Considerable finance is needed to drive the transition to a green, inclusive economy. Estimates indicate that around US$1 trillion of additional investment is needed annually to 2030 to green new infrastructure in energy, transport, buildings and industry. Such an amount, reasonably modest at roughly 1.5% of today's global GDP, sits alongside the need to mobilize US$5 trillion a year for the underlying investment. Further finance is needed for the "softer" investments in health and education, and to overcome the challenges to vulnerable communities from climate change, to ensure that all citizens can participate fully and benefit from tomorrow's economy.

Governments will play a critical role in ensuring that such investments are made public expenditure will play a crucial role, as it has historically in ensuring long-term investment to build today's developed nations. Privately-held financial capital, equally, will need to be a major part of the solution, requiring that the investment logic of this capital can be aligned to the needs of the real economy. *The financial system is the means by which we can channel society's collective financial assets to productive use.*

Financially traded assets are valued at US$225 trillion with further non-traded assets, such as real estate and businesses that are owned by individuals, communities and nations influenced by the financial system. This capital, whilst largely privately owned, represents societies` overall resource for investing in long-term development and well-being. It is now clear that the long-term health of the economy depends on underlying social and environmental systems, while the economy's 'footprint' on these areas is in turn shaped by the dynamics of the financial system.

Clean energy investment in 2012 was about US$250 billion, up four-fold since 2004-06 but barely one third of the US$674 billion invested in fossil fuel exploitation. The carbon

intensity of the world`s leading stock exchanges continues to increase, for London and Newyork stock exchanges by 7 and 37 per cent respectively over the last 2 years. Individuals and financial institutions face an array of possible opportunities to allocate capital and prefer to buy assets that they understand, and that they can sell easily. Long-term infrastructure investments, particularly where it involves new technology or is located in places perceived to have a policy or other instabilities, exemplify what investors tend to be cautious about. *A key role of financial institutions and financial instruments such as bonds and equities is to transform the maturity of such long-term investment to make them an investable proposition.* (Further reading is suggested on this). Driving forward the transition to a green and inclusive economy requires profound changes in the real economy. Major shifts are needed in policy, institutional and governance frameworks, and market and individual behavior to accomplish the changes needed in everything from energy and transport systems to agricultural practices and consumption patterns, as UNEP highlighted in its path-making Towards a Green Economy report in 2011 and has since operationally functioned with governments in over 30 countries. It is our responsibility to frame a functioning and clear vision in this regard now.

Key Questions to be answered:

1. **What are the critical elements that need clarification and communication to facilitate the convergence of the financial system and the green and inclusive economy?**

2. **What are the incentives that currently enable or disable the effective participation of financial actors in the transition to a green and inclusive economy?**

3. **How does the financial market structure, including levels of concentration and ownership, impact environmental and social outcomes?**

4. **What are the relative merits of deploying financial over “real economy” policies and regulations to address environmental and equity issues and outcomes?**

HLPF's track of progress regarding SDGs:

Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all):

SDG 6 on water and sanitation provides a tremendous opportunity to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda, given the water sector's central role in human rights, poverty reduction, inequality elimination, peace and justice, and the environment.
For example, achieving universal access to water is linked to SDG 6 to achieve gender equality. Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 8 out of 10 households where water is not accessible in the home across 61 countries.

The baseline data illustrates that at current progress SDG 6 is not on track to be achieved by 2030. The SDG 6 Synthesis Report 2018 on Water and Sanitation creates a baseline for the SDG 6 monitoring. Making progress on SDG 6 will enable and drive progress on all the other Goals like health to hunger. From gender equality to environmental protection and sustainable growth. All SDGs are mutually dependent on one another; action therefore needs to be of an integrated nature, ensuring that all SDGs advance together. However, many challenges were identified and need to be addressed for the successful implementation of SDG 6:

- **Political engagement: SDG 6 targets present challenges for all countries but continuing with business as usual will not suffice. Achieving sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, tackling pollution at its source will require the profound evolution of actions among policymakers and decision makers. Actions need to be taken now to move towards a more sustainable and resilient path, leaving no one behind, if the 2030 Agenda targets are to be achieved.**
- **Data gap: More and better data are required for national, regional and global monitoring. Data sometimes exist but are often not accessible or shared. The extent of industrial pollution is not known, as discharges are poorly monitored and seldom aggregated at the national level. Insufficient data are generated by countries to adequately measure progress on water-related ecosystems and the benefits they provide. The financial, institutional/organizational and human resources to fully monitor SDG 6 are lacking. Increased uptake of data, including at the sub-national level, to inform decision-making and ensure accountability will be crucial for achieving SDG**

- **The financing gap: Development partners in the WASH sector identified three financial challenges: (1) lack of finance for strengthening the enabling environment and service delivery, (2) untapped use of repayable finance, including microfinance and blended finance, and (3) resources inadequately targeted towards the poor and vulnerable who are unable to access services. Bridging the finance gap necessitates improving the efficiency of existing financial resources, while increasing innovative sources of financing, such as commercial and blended finance, including the private sector. An enabling environment is therefore needed that considers the specialties of water investments (e.g. large upfront capital needs, long terms or associated risk management). ODA is crucial, but it needs targeting where it can be most effective and used to catalyses other funding sources.**

Goal 8 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all):

SDG 8 remains within reach but still we should note that energy lies at the heart of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all by 2030 will open a new world of opportunities for billions of people through new economic opportunities and jobs, empowered women, children and youth, better education and health, more sustainable, equitable and inclusive communities, and greater protections from, and resilience to, climate change. Urgent action is needed, however, to leave no one behind and to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) and consequently other SDGs

• 1 billion people currently live without electricity. From 2000 to 2016, the proportion of the global population with access to electricity increased from 78 per cent to 87 per cent, with the number of people living without access to electricity dipping to just about 1 billion. If the current trends continue, there would still be 674 million people living without access to electricity in 2030. To reach universal access by 2030, the rate of access to electricity needs to improve 0.8 per cent every year.

•3 billion people continue to lack access to clean cooking solutions. Access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking has gradually improved to reach 59 per cent globally in 2016, up 10 percentage points since 2000. Even with this progress, however, almost 3 billion people are still cooking with polluting fuel and stove combinations. To reach universal access to clean cooking by 2030, the annual rate of clean cooking access needs to accelerate to 3 percent. If the current trajectory continues, 2.3 billion of the global population would remain without access to clean cooking in 2030.

All these SDGs and more have a clear linkage and causality with the financial and trade institutions which can help them grow faster and in a more efficient way, we must discuss the role the UN and the global community can play with respect to each SDG that can lead to success or failure of Agenda 2030. Tangible action will require tangible financing and adequate political will.

Possible avenues to evaluate in this session:

1. **Identification of barriers and good practices related to concrete experiences of MGoS contributions to the implementation of Agenda 2030.**
2. **Identification of tools and mechanisms that incorporate or are led by MGoS to foster greater accountability.**
3. **Addressing the global dimension of shared challenges to meeting Agenda 2030, such as climate change, macro-economic challenges and systemic issues such as migration.**
4. **Recommendations for consideration by the HLPF and governments on how to ensure an enabling environment for MGoS to effectively contribute to the implementation and monitoring of Agenda 2030 at all levels, including but not limited to the VNR process.**

Conclusion:

The whole progress of the Agenda 2030 depends on the action and cooperation that the global community and the trade and financial institutions will be able to agree on after successful evaluation of all the relevant SDG goals under this theme and as a whole, hence it is important that we address this issues and have a debate on them constructively, and at the same time we also need to negotiate the best response possible through negotiations to address all these problems.

Further Reading:

https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf
http://www.ifrc.org/Global/hyogo-framework-federation-en.pdf
http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/crisis%20prevention/disaster/UNDP%20and%20the%20Hyogo%20Framework%20for%20Action%20-%2010%20years%20of%20reducing%20disaster%20risk.pdf
http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/drought/docs/HFA_Summary.pdf
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http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002287/228711E.pdf
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https://unhabitat.org/resilience/
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