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**Resources and Preparation Guide**

**ECOSOC**

# **ECOSOC**

## **History**

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has 54 members and is one of the six main bodies of the UN. It was established under Article 61 of the UN Charter in 1965. From 1945 until 1973 the membership of the Economic and Social Council was enlarged from eighteen to twenty- seven and then to fifty-four members. Every year the General Assembly selects 18 members for a period of 3 years.

The ECOSOC holds one substantive session each July for the duration of four weeks which is organized in four segments (High-level, Coordination, Operational Activities, Humanitarian Affairs and General Segments). At the High-level Segment, national cabinet ministers and chiefs of international agencies and other high officials discuss major economic, social and environmental policy issues. A Ministerial declaration is generally adopted on the topic of the High-level Segment, which provides policy guidance and recommendations for action. The year-round work of the Council is carried out in its subsidiary and related bodies.

Since 1998, it held also a meeting each April with finance ministers heading key committees of the [World Bank](#) and the [International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF). The Council holds several short sessions and many preparatory meetings, round tables and panel discussions with the members of civil society throughout the year, to deal with the organization of its work.

## **Functions**

The ECOSOC (President: Ambassador Hamidon Ali) coordinates economic, social, and related work of the 14 UN specialized agencies, functional commissions and five regional commissions. It promotes higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress. Furthermore, it identifies solutions to international economic, social and health problems. The ECOSOC advocates international and educational cooperation and encourages universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## **Changes, Development and current discussions**

ECOSOC deals with various current topics. One of the main topics is the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). At the 2005 World Summit, Member States replicated that ECOSOC was responsible for promoting the implementation of the international development goals including the Millennium Development Goals. During the last few years, the issue of the [Annual Ministerial Review \(AMR\)](#) focused on the MDGs. In 2008, the Review stressed the issue of Sustainable Development, touching upon environmental sustainability, and in 2009, it will focus on Global Health. Member states are supposed to voluntarily report on the

situations in their countries and to provide insights on how the MDGs can be reached more rapidly and more effectively.

When mentioning the MDGs, climate change plays an important role. ECOSOC agreed that addressing the issue of climate change effectively needs extensive approach comprehending the challenges of economic growth and development, food security and energy. It also requires specific actions at the global, regional and national levels to cope with these challenges and stabilize the concept of sustainable development and its implementation.

At the 2005 World Summit, Member States called on ECOSOC to better respond to developments in the international economic, social and environmental fields, as well as to support and complement international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian emergencies. A presidential statement was issued in 2008 urging Member States and stakeholders to act urgently.

In 2010, the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) will focus on the topic of "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and empowerment of women". The AMR provides an opportunity for ECOSOC to put spotlight on the gender equality related Millennium Development Goals, and to help to develop comprehensive strategies.

Given the integral role of social and economic issues in post-conflict peacebuilding, ECOSOC has demonstrated its skills in this area. While encouraging national authorities to create a favourable environment for increased support the ECOSOC Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on African countries emerging from conflict and on Haiti have emphasized the need to mobilize donors. The Council is also making a step forward in stabilizing its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission.

## **Conclusion**

ECOSOC is one of the main bodies of the UN and the coordinator of all the actions concerning economic and social [development](#), human rights, culture, health and education.

We are facing severe economic and social problems which are hard to handle because there are many different factors. ECOSOC is trying its best to find solutions. It is important not only to fight against the impact of gender [inequality](#) and [injustice](#) but to detect its causes and combat them. ECOSOC is working on very urgent topics but is aware that it takes a lot of time and [collaboration](#) between the UN members to find resolutions.

Amelie Daas

## **Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: Implementing the Internationally Agreed Goals and Commitments**

### **Introduction**

Ever since the beginning of humankind, women have always been described as “the weaker gender”. In nearly all cultures and religious communities, they have been tied to the household and have been denied education or personal freedom. Even though the last centuries have brought about significant changes regarding those issues, there are still billions of women in many parts of the world without a chance to take control of their own lives. Especially in many developing countries, the situation for women is beyond all human dignity. This is the reason why Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDGs, which were initiated by the United Nations under the tagline “We Can End Poverty”, are a list of eight goals regarding international development to be achieved by 2015, including the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger, providing education and stopping diseases like HIV/AIDS or Malaria. The third Millennium Development Goal (Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) is one of the two goals the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has put on its agenda for the oncoming SiegMUN.

### **The global situation and recent developments**

Education is a key factor in increasing women’s chances to become independent and powerful. Therefore, the main target of MDG consists of eliminating gender disparity in all levels of education. Educated women are more likely to lead an economically independent life and play a part in politics and public life. Many girls in developing regions do not have access to education, mainly because of poverty. Even though some do receive primary education, many are unable to continue to secondary school levels due to financing problems and lack of protection from dangers like sexual harassment and violence, which is a permanent threat. The schools in developing countries also need reforms and better training for teachers.

Another problem is the unequal representation of women and men in paid employment, where women are outnumbered by men in most developing regions. Moreover, women outnumber men in informal employment, and this form of employment brings missing benefits and lack of security with itself. A positive recent development is that women’s access to employment is now higher than ever before, but the big problem remains that women still earn one-third less than men. Even in many western countries, a woman doing the same job as a man is paid less than the man. Furthermore, in both developing and industrial countries, the so-called “glass ceiling” keeps women who are just as qualified as

their male colleagues from receiving top-level jobs. Governmental measures like quotas to increase the number of female employees are successful in some countries, but the results still demonstrate widespread inequality.

Women need to be given the chance to claim their political and governmental voice. Facts that illustrate this necessity are for example the situation in one third of developing countries, where women form up to only ten percent of parliamentary seats. And speaking in global terms, women constitute just about 18 percent of seats in parliaments worldwide. This seems to be not very much, but at least it is an increase of about 60 percent since 1995. As part of positive developments, the current parliamentary situation in Rwanda can be added: Rwanda has the highest number of female seats in parliament in the world, with about 50 percent of the Chamber of Deputies being female, just like 35 percent of the Senate. Moreover, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supported women in Kuwait during parliamentary elections in 2006, in which women participated for the first time ever in the state's history, even though no woman was elected in the end. The campaign was met with harsh criticism by male Islamic leaders.

### **What can your country do?**

Regarding the global situation, the need for more effective policies and legal frameworks to regulate gender equality becomes clear. Women's economic and political participation needs to be pushed forward now more than ever.

Being a delegate in this year's SiegmUN ECOSOC, you should have knowledge about the situation of women in the country you represent. You can ask yourself the following questions during your research: Is the problem of gender equality taken seriously in the state you represent? Are political motivation and financial resources available to deal with the problem? How are women represented in economy, daily life and politics? What measures have been taken in the past and up until now to improve the situation for women in your country? Has significant progress been made? Does the educational system work, and does it work for girls as well as for boys? What chances does a young girl in your country have? How does your state support and work with the various UN programmes and the MDGs?

Elisabeth Haefs

## Sources and suggested research

- Main website of the UN: <http://www.un.org/>.
- Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml>.
- International Museum of Women: <http://www.imow.org/home/index>.
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## **Improving Aid Effectiveness in order to Reach the MDGs**

### **Introduction**

The UN Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000, which set the target date for the eight MDGs by 2015.

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

- ☐ End Poverty and Hunger
- ☐ Universal Education
- ☐ Gender Equality
- ☐ Child Health
- ☐ Maternal Health
- ☐ Combat HIV/AIDS
- ☐ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Global Partnership

The eight Millennium Development Goals are build on agreements made at major United Nations' conferences of the 1990s. Compared to their predecessors they recognize complex interconnections between them and summarize in the final goal that without the global partnership the progress in achieving the other goals may fail. Moreover, the aid effectiveness as the essential factor and part of the last goal has to be taken into account to reach all other MDGs. The next Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, which will take place in 20-22 September 2010 in New York aims to accelerate the progress towards the MDGs.<sup>1</sup> Among the others, the improvement of the aid effectiveness is on the agenda (as “Widening and strengthening partnerships”).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, this important issue was put on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the oncoming SiegMUN.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/>

<sup>2</sup><http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/programme.shtml>

## **The global situation and recent developments**

“The Goals are ambitious but feasible and, together with the comprehensive United Nations development agenda, set the course for the world’s efforts to alleviate extreme poverty by 2015”, said United Nations Secretary-General BAN Ki-moon.<sup>3</sup>

United Nations development agenda aims to fill the gaps which were found by an Inter-Agency and Expert-Group on MDG Indicators led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in order to accelerate the progress towards the MDGs.

According to the latest The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010,<sup>4</sup> despite the rise of the aid and the financial crisis, many developed countries (especially in Africa) receive less than the required amount. Moreover, in 2009 most countries have not reached the UN target for official aid, the only countries to reach or exceed the target were Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The largest donors by volume in 2009 were the United States, followed by France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan. Therefore the targets which are set in the report are following: firstly, to address the special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states and secondly, to develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, nondiscriminatory trading and financial system.

United Nations Development Group (UNDG) considers in the United Nations Development Programme the ensuring of the Global Partnership as essential in order to create a functioning environment for the MDGs. “The Partnership deliver on ODA commitments and improve the predictability, effectiveness, division of labour and modality of disbursement”.<sup>5</sup>

The required amount of ODA (official development assistance) is planned to be received while reaching the target of 0.7 percent of GNI (gross national income). Furthermore, accountability for past commitments promotes the quality and effectiveness of new commitments. Moreover, multilateral organizations should be responsible for the equal distribution of the ODA. Innovative financing mechanisms should not be contradictory to the traditional mechanisms of ODA.

Parallel with the General Assembly’s triennial comprehensive policy review (TCPR) resolutions, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, the 2005 World Summit, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus, and the 2008 Doha Declaration on Financing for Development,

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>[http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset\\_id=2620072](http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/stream/asset/?asset_id=2620072)



UNDG promotes effective development assistance. United Nations Development Group (UNDG) started working on UNDG Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness. This plan includes operational instructions how United Nations agencies should imply concrete indicators and targets regarding the Paris Declaration and TCPR commitments in order to increase national ownership and national capacity.<sup>6</sup>

“Aid as one of the instruments for achieving the MDGs and securing development results” was claimed by UNDG at the 2008 Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The main points were “the importance of capacity development and the use of country systems; untying aid, limiting conditionality and making aid more predictable to complement growing new sources of development finance”.<sup>7</sup>

However, the recent situation in aid effectiveness issue is marked by partial progress which was made by the UN system in implementing the Paris principles and confirmed by the 2008 Paris Declaration Monitoring Survey. But in order to achieve the targets set for 2010 progress in using country systems, including use of procurement and financial systems is needed.

### **What can your country do?**

Regarding the recent global situation and developments, described above, first of all, you should examine following important for this issue documents:

Rome Declaration on Harmonization 2003; Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness 2005; Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) 2008; Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR) 2007, most of them are presented on the Home Page of UNDG.

Secondly, representing the specific country in this year’s SiegMUN ECOSOC, you should have knowledge about the situation in your country.

You can ask yourself the following questions during your research: What political motivation and financial resources are available in your country to deal with the problem? Which national development strategies are represented in your country, what national priorities are important? What measures have been taken in the past to improve the situation? Has significant progress been made? How the Paris principles are implemented in your state? How does your state support and work with the various UN programmes and the MDGs? What new solutions can you offer according to your country?

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=219>

<sup>7</sup><http://www.accrahl.net/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/ACCRAEXT/0,,contentMDK:21690872~menuPK:64861438~pagePK:64861884~piPK:64860737~theSitePK:4700791,00.html>

Besides, the essential information regarding specific countries you can find in countries' agendas.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, see new ideas for the discussions in the Home Page of UNDG (<http://www.undg.org/>).

Tatiana Ilyushkina

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<sup>8</sup> Sri Lanka Agenda: [http://www.mdg.lk/inpages/thegoals/goal8\\_global\\_partnership.shtml](http://www.mdg.lk/inpages/thegoals/goal8_global_partnership.shtml)

### Sources and suggested research

- Main website of the UN: <http://www.un.org/>.
- Millennium Development Goals: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml/>.
- Website of the ECOSOC: <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/>.
- Website of the UNDG: <http://www.undg.org/>, especially "[Programming Reference Guide](http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=219/) : Aid Effectiveness " : <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=219/>.
- Website of the Accra High Level Forum, "Milestones in Aid Effectiveness" : <http://www.accrahlhf.net/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/ACCRAEXT/0,,contentMDK:21690872~menuPK:64861438~pagePK:64861884~piPK:64860737~theSitePK:4700791,00.html>
- MDGs in Sri Lanka Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development: [http://www.mdg.lk/inpages/thegoals/goal8\\_global\\_partnership.shtml/](http://www.mdg.lk/inpages/thegoals/goal8_global_partnership.shtml/).