



MUNBU 2021

Study Guide

United Nations Economic and
Social Council

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Agenda Item: Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Fragile States

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I. Letter from the Secretary General

Dear Delegates, Organization and Academic Team Members,

On behalf of Model United Nations Bilkent University, it is my absolute honor to welcome you all to our annual conference this January 2021. With our current circumstances, our conference will be held virtually, on Zoom where our teams will be working to assist you through each step of the conference.

The beginning of this year marked a new milestone, one which we had to adapt to without much of a choice. All around the world, offices, academic institutions, and social functions have been put to rest upon the upsurge of COVID-19 cases across the globe. However, behind closed doors, and computer screens, policy makers along with specialists in this field worked to combat the virus's further spread. When everything was halted, diplomatic roles were not. It is in times like these where we witness the importance of policy making and governance. Model United Nations conferences aim at cultivating the diplomat within you. The caucuses allow you to convey your beliefs, within your country's policies, and formulate solutions together through means of diplomatic debate.

Since the establishment of the Model United Nations Society in Bilkent University, we strove to uphold the values that the United Nations entails, diplomacy being the highest amongst them. Which is why, this year, despite the circumstances, I am proud to announce that MUNBU will be one amongst the few conferences which have committed to their message and maintained their annual conference, albeit virtually.

Model United Nations, as I am sure anyone who has experienced it before, shapes you, and defines your views as you continue to move forward. So for those who have experienced it, I am very happy that you are here once again today, giving this experience another chance and allowing it to mold you into a more refined version of yourself. For those who are coming here for the first time, I promise you that our team will offer you the same experience that has been offered to those before you. One which will push you to become an individual integral to your society's development and prosperity.

This year, our committees have been chosen not on the basis of future challenges, but rather they were specifically picked based on what we see today; pandemics, security threats, needs for social and economic reforms, and a call for stable regimes. It is now your duty to fill in the shoes of world leaders and diplomats and come up with the solutions which will allow us to move forward. Our registration is officially open and we hope to welcome you all to our conference this January!

And until then, stay safe
Sincerely,
Mona El Wali
Secretary General of MUNBU'21.

II. Letter from the Under Secretary-General

Esteemed delegates,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to MUNBU 2020. My name is İdil Timuroğlu and I will be serving you as the Deputy Secretary-General of MUNBU 2021. We have worked tirelessly to make this conference an incredible experience for you. We initially had some concerns given the difficult conditions of the pandemic, yet you have shown such great interest in our conference that we had to create a new committee not even a week before the conference!

The agenda item of ECOSOC is highly important as Sustainable Development Goals can transform our world into a more sustainable, equal and prosperous one. I sincerely hope that you will have both engaging and enjoyable debates while sharing your ideas with the committee. I advise you to read the provided study guide carefully in order to find realistic and implementable solutions. Also, please do not be limited to this guide as it has been prepared as a starting point for your research.

I would like to thank dear Secretary-General Mona El Wali for giving me this opportunity and for her companionship during this crazy journey. I would like to thank the academic team for their comprehensive study guides and the hard work they put into this conference. I would like to thank Director General Eralp Kumbasar and his talented team for their hard work.

Should you have any questions concerning the conference or the committee, feel free to send me an e-mail at idiltimuroglu@hotmail.com. I am looking forward to seeing you all.

Best regards,

İdil Timuroğlu

III. Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as one of the six main organs of the (UN) in 1945. The committee works through 14 specialized agencies and 13 functional and regional commissions. The council is mandated to serve as the primary body for policy dialogue on economic, social, cultural, and health-related topics.

The United Nations Charter dictates that (ECOSOC) has the willing capacity to, “make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters” including human rights and freedoms, to the General Assembly and its specialized agencies. The committee also works to aid the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in the context of humanitarian interventions. The initiatives and aid which (ECOSOC) extends is operated through its subsidiary bodies and a range of civil society organizations and nongovernmental organizations.

In conclusion, the committee is integral in coordinating United Nations’ humanitarian and economic development programs. It has continuously displayed efforts to tackle global issues, as will be seen through this guide. The council remains committed to maintain development across countries, specifically those which otherwise would not be able to tackle any of their domestic insecurities. (ECOSOC) promises a dedication to mobilizing its subsidiary bodies and other agencies which they have allied with, to ensure political commitment towards development frameworks; ie. Sustainable Development Goals, Millennium Development Goals.

The council continues to be significant in the sense that its policies are development based, with the utmost intention to honor their promise for development, as seen through the 2030 Agenda.

IV. Introduction to the Topic

A. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sustainable Development Goals first came into life in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro with the purpose of providing a set of goals to tackle the pressing environmental, political and economic issues¹. In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs came as a replacement for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which tackled many important issues. The MDGs worked for many years as a beacon of hope for a better, more equal world. The SDGs were introduced so as to further international action towards a more sustainable path and to work towards tackling more urgent matters concerning our world today.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs which call for the collective work of member states to end poverty, ensure peace and prosperity, improve health and education, protect the planet, boost economic growth and reduce inequality². The SDGs are interconnected which means that actions concerning one goal impacts the rest of the goals. All in all, the SDGs offer an excellent chance to transform our world for the better

¹United Nations Development Programme. “*Background on the Goals*”.
<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/background/>

²United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development. “*History*”.
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

and improve it for future generations. They give us the opportunity to create a more sustainable, prosperous and safer world without poverty and with the pledge to Leave No One Behind and first reaching those farthest behind. This pledge, along with all of the other international values, make the SDGs truly transformative³. SDGs are carried out in compliance with the international human rights law that is to say by eliminating gender inequalities and all forms of discrimination.



The SDGs serve as focus points in order to ensure sustainable development. Each 17 goal is a small picture, when united these small pictures make up one big picture which is how we should perceive the 2030 Agenda. “SDGs are the pressure points that have the capability to affect the wellbeing of the entire planet and the people who live on it”⁴.

Moreover, some goals are seen as means to achieve the general or final goals. For instance, the water and energy SDGs (6 and 7) are not necessarily final goals, but they are means to achieve health and wellbeing⁵. Furthermore, some goals such as education and health can be considered final goals per se, but they’re also means to achieving every other sustainable development goal. For more integrated implementation of the Goals, it is important to note these interconnections.

B. Fragile States within the SDG Framework

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has developed a framework in which the pressure points of fragile states have been projected.

³United Nations Sustainable Development Group. “*Universal Values*”. <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values>

⁴United Nations System Staff College. “*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. https://www.unssc.org/sites/unssc.org/files/2030_agenda_for_sustainable_development_kcsd_primer_en.pdf

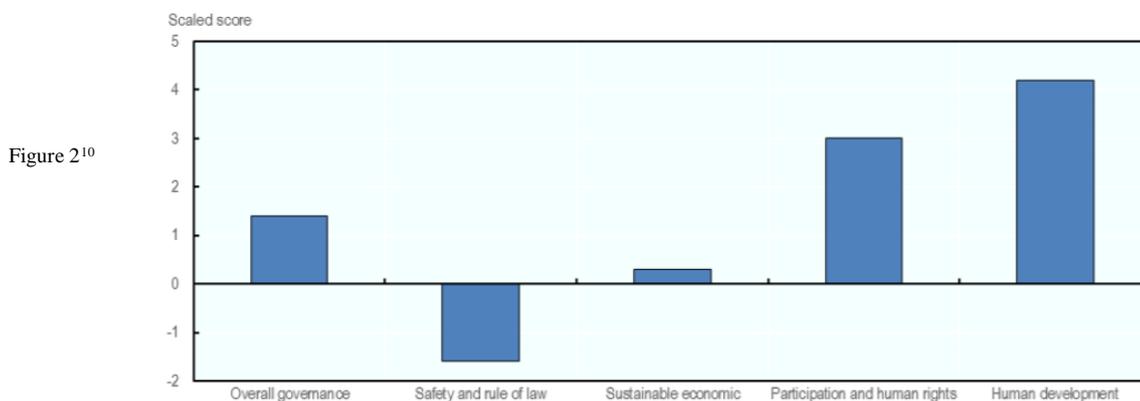
⁵International Institute for Sustainable Development. “*Making SDG Implementation Easier: Thinking about Goals as Means*”. <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/making-sdg-implementation-easier-thinking-about-goals-as-means/>

sense that 70% of Syrian refugees in Lebanon aged between 5-14 were illiterate, or for Decent Work, where most refugees are facing challenging in accessing labour markets (intensifying poverty, and standing in the way of the first SDG goal). Those displaced due to conflict often face restrictions, discriminations, and less rights. Some even report cases of abuse and sexual harassment.⁸

Intrastate conflicts, or civil wars, have also had their influence on the Sustainable Development Goals on those residing within them. For example, due to political conflicts in Yemen, acute malnutrition rates among children under the age of five are the highest ever recorded with more than half a million cases in southern districts. In addition to this goals targeted towards health facilities have been obstructed due to destruction of such institutions or inaccessibility due to limited mobility in the war.⁹

D. Other Factors Influencing (SDGs) and their Attainment

Through this section, we will highlight other obstacles which must be tackled for Agenda 2030 to succeed.



We must note that governance displays itself as another important indicator of state fragility and thus its ability to develop. As we see, low governance has led to decrease in safety, law and lack of economic growth. Corruption undermines government performance and might raise tensions between citizens and fragile governments. Weak governance is portrayed through weak policies as much as through the erosion of rights. Undermining the right to public speech means misrepresentation-- or none at all. Away from the conflict which rises upon the displeasement of the citizenry due to unanswered grievances, in the context of (SDGs) public demands are not represented. The matter shifts in this case. How will a state provide sustainability, if the targeted population has not made its demands clear?

Another matter which affects one of the goals, that being Gender Equality, is the living contexts of fragile states. In 2019, 38% of women and girls in fragile contexts (328 million) did not have legal protections against domestic violence, and half (425 million) did not have legal protections against

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ U. (2021, January 09). Malnutrition surges among U. young children in Yemen as conditions worsen. Retrieved January 13, 2021, from <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/malnutrition-surges-among-young-children-yemen-conditions-worsen#:~:text=One%20in%20five%20children%20under,the%20south%2C%20UN%20agencies%20warn&text=In%20Hodeidah%27s%20lowlands%2C%20more%20than,of%20children%20are%20acutely%20malnourished>

¹⁰ Mo Ibrahim Foundation (2019[115]), “Agendas 2063 & 2030: Is Africa on Track?”, https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2020-02/African_Governance_Report_2019_0.pdf.

gender-based discrimination in employment. In addition to this, matters of lack of political representation, healthcare inadequacies and the absence of official institutions to take care of these matters further fuels the gender gap.

On a last note, we wish to shed light on the effect of disasters on (SDGs) in fragile contexts. Disasters can arrest and reverse progress on SDGs everywhere, but especially in fragile contexts due to their multidimensional fragility. For example, 55% of the total number of affected people by natural disasters is attributed to those in fragile states, a 2019 report states. (As seen through the example of Cyclone Idai Disaster in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe; fragile states.)

Please note that the factors are not limited to the indicated ones, but can also go beyond.

IV. Previous Actions

A. UNDP Dedicated Projects for SDG Implementation in Fragile Settings

In fragile settings Goal 16 in the 2020 Agenda plays a crucial role. Its adoption affirms that governance is part of sustainable development. As a result, UNDP launched its initiative ‘Making Progress on the SDGs by Building Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies’ in order to promote SDG implementation especially in fragile settings as Goal 16 is a crucial starting point en route to achieving the rest of the Goals.

The mainstreaming of Goal 16 in states impacted by conflict and fragility requires a profound understanding of how to maintain peace, including managing the implementation of political settlements; address the legacy of conflict; encourage and reinforce national and local leadership; facilitate the creation and institutionalization of public dialogues to build consensus for positive change; and find new ways of strengthening primary government functions with full reach across the state¹¹.

1. Conflict Prevention

UNDP has helped prevent and ease conflicts in 50 countries by means of national mechanisms for promotion of peace and empowerment of national and local mediators. The main target in conflict prevention is to promote dialogue and consensus-building. In cooperation with the UN Department of Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office, and the Peacebuilding Fund peace and development advisors (PDAs) take part in this approach¹².

2. Infrastructure of Peace

Reinforcing national and local capacities in order to eliminate conflicts and disputes peacefully is a priority for UNDP for the purpose of advancing Goal 16. It does so through establishing social dialogue and reconciliation processes which strengthens institutions as a result of the amalgamation of various social sectors to resolve disputes.

¹¹ United Nations Development Programme. “UNDP OFFER ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION IN FRAGILE SITUATIONS”, 2016.

¹² Ibid.

3. Core Government Functions (CGFs)

Creating peaceful and inclusive societies through implementation of transparent, effective and accountable institutions is another priority of Goal 16. It is crucial to prioritize enabling core government functions (CGFs) in post-conflict and fragile states in order to make sure that public finance, civil service management, capacities to coordinate public policy and the extension of state authority to the local level to help stabilize the government¹³.

4. Rule of law, justice and security

In fragile settings, it is indispensable to strengthen the rule of law for peace and development. Fragile and conflict-stricken countries need to advance comprehensive national justice, security sector reform strategies and capacity development support to state institutions to ensure justice and provide security services. UNDP delivers its rule of law support to crisis countries via a global focal point arrangement, for which UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) works together¹⁴.

5. Social Cohesion and Inclusion

It is incredibly important to promote social cohesion, inclusivity and resilience to internal and external shocks to both countries and communities. Political and social exclusion substantially induces fragility, conflict and instability, while in inclusive societies governments tend to be more legitimate and effective, and the societies more peaceful and resilient¹⁵. Therefore, recovering from fragility entails inclusive political processes which commit relevant actors to work together toward peace and to fight poverty.

V. The Impact of COVID-19 on Fragile States

Although this topic has been set for years now through different commissions and bodies, we believed it is of utmost importance to discuss SDGs within the context of a pandemic. COVID-19 represents a critical juncture for fragile contexts and the 2030 Agenda as it highlights the interconnectivity of health, economic, environmental and social aspects of fragility.

a. Healthcare Accessibility

First off, in the context of healthcare, we can look into fragile states in their citizens which they cannot seem to aid, and in the refugees they might be hosting.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

- i. The absence of healthcare accessibility and affordability makes those residing in fragile states highly susceptible to contracting the virus.
- ii. Refugees specifically, are at a higher disadvantage. Their living conditions; crowded shelters, lack of sanitary measures, absence of financial aid to provide such precautions, and limited access to healthcare due to inadequate rights has put these minorities at higher risks.

b. Environment

On another less direct note, it is argued in the literature that the occurrence of a pandemic, which has made nations fall silent in fear is but a preview of what climate change will be doing. Signifying a need to strengthen our coping facilities. And as mentioned before, fragile states are the most vulnerable in natural disasters.

c. Economy

If there is one thing shared by all, it would be COVID-19's impact on the world economy. However, this extends to fragile states in specific; for they host the largest numbers of daily-wage earners, as opposed to others in corporate jobs per say. Through studies, albeit not complete due to the ongoing pandemic, it is expected that 26 million additional people would fall into extreme poverty in fragile contexts. This figure represents 43% of the total number of people expected to fall into extreme poverty (60 million).¹⁶

¹⁶ Marley, J., & Desai, H. (2020, September 17). Fragility and Agenda 2030: Navigating shocks and pressures in fragile contexts. Retrieved January 13, 2021, from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/fragility-and-agenda-2030_65d5cb9c-en;jsessionid=Nzc8ORC6NwO2GxfGOsd8zHG.ip-10-240-5-147