

UC Davis Model United Nations Conference 2013
Committee – Economic and Social Council
(ECOSOC)



Greetings, Delegates!

I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome you to the United Nations Economic and Social Council of UC Davis Model United Nations 2013. My name is Timothy Chidyausiku and I am honored to serve as your head chair throughout this conference. I am currently in my second year of studies towards a double major in international relations and economics, after which I plan on graduate school. Much like you, I have been involved in Model United Nations and various other forms of debate since my high school years, and haven't quit since. I will be assisted by my Vice-Chair Bhumika Kukreja who will help me in committee. Together, we will try and give you the best debate possible on the given agendas. I would like to give you a few pointers which shall help you in the preparation of your research. Firstly, the background guide is the starting point of your research. It is just the tip of the iceberg and should be used as a beginning point for much more detailed analysis and observations pertaining to the agenda. Do much more research so that you are aware as to every salient detail, country profile or otherwise, regarding committee. Secondly, maintain decorum. Have a thorough knowledge of the Rules of Procedure. Remember you are the ambassadors of your respective countries and it goes without saying that diplomacy and good conduct should be maintained at all times. Onto more substantive matters, together we will tackle two pressing issues that are prevalent in the global community and can be volatile in nature: peace-building and post-conflict recovery, and industrialization vs. green jobs.

Topic 1: Peacebuilding and Post-Conflict Recovery

Introduction

In 2011, there were 37 armed conflicts that took place in 30 different locations around the world, and of these conflict, six were considered “wars.” “An armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year”, and a conflict reaches the level of “war,” when the number of deaths increases to one thousand or more in a given calendar year. Because of the vast number of conflicts around the war, there is a need for peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. The United Nations serve as intermediary between the conflicting groups.¹ The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the main bodies of the United Nations, deals with “the economic, social and related work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and institutions.”² Because of the amount of current conflicts, the United Nations have taken a great interest in developing ways to facilitate peacebuilding between conflicting groups. Peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery are international tasks that require the assistance from the UN’s multiple bodies and other organizations, such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). “The United Nations has been at the center of expanding international peacebuilding efforts, from the verification of peace agreements in southern Africa, Central America and Cambodia in the 1990s, to subsequent efforts to consolidate peace and strengthen states in the Balkans, Timor-Leste, and West Africa, to contemporary operations in Afghanistan, Haiti and Sudan.”³

Recent Policy

In 2005, various leaders from around the world attended the World Summit at the UN headquarters in New York City in order to follow-up on the World Summit in 2000, which discussed the role of the United Nations at the turn of the 21st century. At the 2000 World Summit, the UN adopted the Millennium Summit Declaration, which dealt with peace, security and disarmament as one of its topics. ⁴ During the 2005 World Summit Meeting, world leaders, once again, discussed issues of peace, security, and disarmament. As a result of the meeting, advances were made.⁵ The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was created to support “peace efforts in countries emerging from conflict.”⁶ “The Peacebuilding Commission plays a unique role in (1) bringing together all of the relevant actors, including international donors, the international financial institutions, national governments, troop contributing countries; (2) marshalling resources and (3) advising on and proposing integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and where appropriate, highlighting any gaps that threaten to undermine peace.”⁶ Other advances included various methods to strengthen peacekeeping, fight against terrorism, control proliferation of weapons, and combat transnational crimes.⁵ As members of ECOSOC, you should consider the past actions done by ECOSOC and see whether or not they should be revised in order to obtain the goal of peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery. For example, delegates should think of ways to effectively implement peacekeeping agreements between nations and make sure that these agreements are met.

Current Issues/Solutions

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has grown much stronger since its creation. The PBC has a Peacekeeping Fund that it uses to fund activities that help implement peace agreements, promote peaceful resolution and coexistence, help rebuild economic sectors, and other activities deemed appropriate by the UN. The PBC funds through two different funds, one for immediate needs and one for long-term needs for peacekeeping and post-conflict recovery.⁷ The PBC's Peacekeeping Fund is used in various countries in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia.⁷ It is your job as delegates to research if the PBC has helped your own respective country and see the effect it has on your own nation. Using what you researched, you should develop an opinion on the effectiveness of the Peacebuilding Commission. Also, you should consider the current method for post-conflict recovery and see if it has worked in your own respective nation. This should play a large role in debating how the ECOSOC should adjust policies in light of recent world conflicts.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the effect of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)?
2. How does funding affect the UN's peacekeeping mission?
3. Are there methods to maximize funding?
4. Are there are other more efficient methods to peacekeeping?
5. Should there be reparations for damages done to conflicting nation states?
6. What should the method be for post-conflict recovery?
7. What should the funding for post-conflict recovery be focused on?
8. Should policies be more general or, at the risk of efficiency, specific to regions?

Helpful Links

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/>

<http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>

<http://www.pcr.uu.se/>

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/>

Note: Contact head chair for information regarding country/bloc position, if necessary.

Topic 2: Industrialization vs. Green Jobs

Introduction

One of the biggest challenges that shall face the global economy in the near future is that of energy security. With the world economy witnessing increasing economic activity, and developing economies growing at rapid paces, there is massive pressure to increase the supply of the world's current energy sources. Toughening this situation is the fact that as per estimates, around 85% of the world's current energy needs are met by non-renewable sources of energy, which, once depleted, shall not be replenished. It is also important to understand that supply of non-renewable sources of energy, especially oil, are prone to fluctuations caused by much larger factors relating to geo-political tensions. On the other side of the spectrum, production of energy sources like coal may hit roadblocks due to socio-economic factors like population displacement caused by mining operations. Under these circumstances, it seems viable for the world's energy economy to diversify its energy portfolio. In other words, it would be economically sensible for economies to look beyond the present conventional sources of energy, and exploit different avenues to ensure higher levels of wind, solar, hydroelectric and nuclear energy occupy the global energy portfolio. While it cannot be denied that said renewable energy sources are already being exploited in many nations, statistical figures on the global dependence on non-renewable sources clearly highlight that present levels of non-renewable energy being produced are unsustainable and have negative environmental consequences, as compared to their "eco-friendly" counterparts. Despite the scientific appraisal with respect to the sustainability of renewable sources, there are also some well-founded reservations regarding their use. The overall potential of

hydroelectric, wind and solar energy across different nations, for instance, is one such issue. Exploitation of these sources require significant financial investments unavailable to most nations, and a long-term technological strategy that involves changing the very structure of the current global, energy, economy. Similarly, nuclear energies come with their own limitations, the aftermath of the 2011 Japanese Tsunami giving legitimacy to concerns regarding such technology.

Present Scenario

Non –Renewable Sources

The BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2012 summarizes the global energy scenario, and throws light on some of the most important facets of the same. As per this document, world primary energy consumption grew by 2.5% in 2011, roughly in line with the 10-year average. Consumption in OECD countries, which comprise almost all the major developed economies of the world, fell by 0.8%, the third decline in the past four years. Non-OECD consumption grew by 5.3%, in line with the 10-year average, hence reflecting the growing needs of the emerging economies of the world and hinting towards one of the possible reasons why energy sources may turn scarce in the future. Noteworthy in this context is the fact that in 2011, China recorded the largest increment to global consumption growth (+505,000 b/d, +5.5%) although the growth rate was below the 10-year average. On the whole, oil remained the world's leading fuel, at 33.1% of global energy consumption. Coal now accounts for 30.3% of global energy consumption, the highest share since 1969. Consumption outside the OECD rose by an above-average 8.4%, led by Chinese consumption growth of 9.7%.

Renewable Sources:

Global hydroelectric output grew by 1.6%, the weakest growth since 2003. Heavy rainfall drove strong growth in North America (+13.9%) – with the US recording the strongest increment on record – offsetting drought-related declines in Europe and China. Worldwide nuclear output fell by 4.3%, the largest decline on record, on the back of sharp declines in Japan (-44.3%) and Germany (-23.2%). Global biofuel production stagnated, rising by just 0.7% or 10,000 barrels per day oil equivalent (b/doe), the weakest annual growth since 2000. In contrast, renewable energy used in power generation grew by an above-average 17.7%, driven by continued robust growth in wind energy (+25.8%), which accounted for more than half of renewable power generation for the first time in recorded history.

Current Issues/Solutions

The high reliance on non-renewable sources of energy is aptly described in the following statements made in a 2011 report issued by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The report states:

“The way we produce and use energy today is not sustainable. Our main fossil fuel sources – oil, coal and gas – are finite natural resources, and we are depleting them at a rapid rate. Furthermore they are the main contributors to climate change, and the race to the last ‘cheap’ fossil resources evokes disasters for the natural environment as seen recently in the case of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. In the developing world, regional and local desertification is caused by depletion of fuel wood and other biomass sources that are often used very inefficiently causing substantive in-door pollution and millions of deaths annually. A fully sustainable renewable power supply is the only way we can secure energy for all and avoid environmental catastrophe.”

Various estimates show that sooner than later, we shall run out of oil supplies from the existing sources, which implies that new sources of oil will have to be exploited. The catch lies in the fact that these new sources that will have to be exploited are generally located across hostile terrains and climatic conditions, many of them serving as protected animal habitats. At some point in time, we may reach a position wherein the cost of exploiting these sources may far exceed the profits that an oil producer may be able to realize in the oil market. If appropriate pre-emptive steps are not taken in order to ensure that the global energy economy is insulated from the catastrophic impacts of such a predicament, the situation may lead to wide-ranging consequences on social, economic and political fronts. Competition for fossil fuel resources is a source of international tension, and potentially conflict. Energy companies are increasingly looking to fill the gap with unconventional sources of oil and gas, such as shale gas, oil from deep water platforms like BP's Deepwater Horizon, or the Canadian tar sands, but these come at an unprecedented cost – and not just in economic terms. From an additional perspective, the WWF reports, “Even if fossil fuel supplies were infinite, we would have another compelling reason for an urgent switch to renewable energy: climate change. Hundreds of millions of people worldwide are already affected by water shortages, crop failures, tropical diseases, flooding and extreme weather events – conditions that are likely to be made worse by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gasses in the Earth's atmosphere. The WHO estimates that climate change is already causing more than 150,000 deaths a year. To avoid devastating consequences, we must keep eventual global warming below 1.5°C compared to pre-Industrial temperatures. To have a chance of doing that, global greenhouse gas emissions need to start falling within the next five years, and we need to cut them by at least 80 per cent globally by 2050

(from 1990 levels) – and even further beyond that date. The global energy sector holds the key. It is responsible for around two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions, an amount that is increasing at a faster rate than for any other sector. Coal is the most carbon-intensive fuel and the single largest source of global greenhouse gas emissions. Embracing renewable energy, along with ambitious energy-saving measures, is the best way to achieve the rapid emissions reductions we need. Renewable and efficient energy can reduce dependency on fossil fuels, as well as helping to create new jobs in emerging low carbon sectors. People in poorer countries are being hit twice by the oil industry. They are the first to suffer the impacts of climate change, while their economies are blighted by the rising cost of imported fuel. Instead of giving taxpayer handouts to the fossil fuel industry through World Bank aid programs and Export Credit Guarantee schemes, countries like the UK should be investing in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in developing countries, which will improve access to energy for the poor and help build stronger economies. While rapidly emerging economies such as China and India are forging ahead on wind and solar power, little has been invested in Africa. This is not because of a lack of renewable energy resources, but because private sector investors see the continent as a riskier proposition. Under the United Nations scheme to give poor countries access to low-carbon technology – the clean development mechanism – the lion's share of the billions of investment has gone to China, followed by India and other big emerging economies, but a paltry sum has gone to build projects in Africa. The global energy crisis is a daunting challenge. Yet we do not have to look far for the solutions. Energy derived from the sun, the wind, the Earth's heat, water and the sea has the potential to meet the world's electricity needs many times over, even allowing for fluctuations in supply and demand. We can greatly reduce the amount of

energy we use through simple measures like insulating buildings, recycling materials and installing efficient biomass stoves. Biomass from waste, crops and forest resources has potential to provide a renewable source of energy – although this raises its own social and environmental issues. But the pace of change is far too slow. Huge quantities of fossil fuels continue to be extracted and used, and global carbon emissions are still rising. Government subsidies and private investments in fossil fuels and nuclear power ventures still vastly outweigh those into renewable energy and energy efficiency, even though the latter would give a far greater long-term return. For this reason, international bodies such as the UN Economic and Social Council are tasked in developing comprehensive solutions to the vast array of issues regarding the issue of expanding renewable energy in an age of industrialization. It is up to the ECOSOC member nations to take into consideration the effects of policy on the economic and social, understanding that some world regions are resistant to these changes, while others see it as the only way forward in building a more sustainable future.