



Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference XI

Saturday, January 28th to Sunday, January 29th, 2023

Boston University Academy

Boston, MA

**UN COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL
(ECOSOC)**

Background Guide

Introduction from the chair and vice-chair:

Hello, Delegates!

My name is Adam Quackenbush, I am a junior at Boston University Academy, and I will be your Chair for BUAMUN. Owen Bergstein '26 will be my co-chair. This committee will be modeled on the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which coordinates the economic and social fields of the United Nations and serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the United Nations System.

In terms of my experience and history with MUN, I was a part of the MUN team at my middle school for three years, where we attended multiple conferences, such as a few at Northeastern University, and one in New York. I was a vice-chair for a virtual BUAMUN conference two years ago, Chair for BUAMUN X last year, and I loved it so much that I'm back this year again. I'm very excited to see you all on the day of the conference!

Make sure to do your research, come prepared for anything, and be open to all ideas. You may go into the conference with a very set idea of what you want to accomplish but come out of it with a whole new perspective. I hope that any delegate, whether they are experienced or not, comes out of this conference having learned something, and enjoyed themselves. Don't forget, MUN isn't just about ideas and resolutions. It's about establishing connections with people and coming to a consensus as a group.

I'm looking forward to seeing all of your brilliant ideas in the debate and welcome, delegates, to BUAMUN'S ECOSOC!

Sincerely,

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Committee Information:

The ECOSOC committee is a committee focused on economic and other issues on an international scale. Essentially:

“The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) deals with economic, social, cultural and health matters as well as human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also coordinates the work of the UN and the specialized agencies” – UN Documentation: Economic and Social Council

As mentioned above, ECOSOC deals with a wide purview of issues but, as with most UN agencies, ECOSOC especially aims to protect nations most vulnerable to political and socioeconomic instability. This agency represents a symbiosis between developing and developed countries, how developed countries are those who send the monetary aid they have to help nations in greater trouble. There are many, many issues the ECOSOC deals with, but most deal with the economies of nations around the world. This ECOSOC committee is meant to give you a feel of how countries deal with economic issues through the United Nations.

The two main topics covered in this committee:

- Rural development, and how to best fund rural development in underdeveloped and developing nations
 - Interests of developed nations: to issue rural development foreign aid to underdeveloped and developing nations while ensuring transparency in the usage of said aid
 - Interests of developing and underdeveloped nations: to bolster local economies and reduce poverty/migration through rural development
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Position Paper Guidelines:

This committee requires 2 position papers. They are on the topics of your knowledge and understanding of the ECOSOC committee and your nation's stance on the issues, economic or otherwise, presented to the committee. The absence of at least one position paper will disqualify you (the delegate) from receiving an award. The quality, depth, and clarity of your position paper(s) will influence award decisions. Each position paper should be 1-3 pages and double-spaced. This includes citations which are preferably in the format of footnotes. To insert a footnote, simply click *Insert > Footnote*. (N.B.: Footnotes go after periods.) We suggest a 3-paragraph position paper following the general outline below, but as long as the position paper meets the aforementioned specifications, the exact number of paragraphs will not be taken into consideration.

Possible position paper outline:

- 1) Introduction to your delegation and the topic as a whole
- 2) The position of your delegation
- 3) Your delegations proposed solutions

Furthermore, the position paper must be titled in the following format:

Delegation: Troy Bolton

School: East High School

Committee: ECOSOC

Position: Sweden

Topic: [TOPIC]

Topic 1: Funding rural development in underdeveloped and developing nations

One of ECOSOC's most important goals is the promotion of sustainable development in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 2, "Zero Hunger," expresses one of ECOSOC's most urgent goals: to "*End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.*"¹ Many strategies are needed to achieve this goal, but of particular importance is rural development.

Broadly, rural development refers to efforts to increase agriculture in food production in ways that are sustainable and reduce food insecurity, but rural development can have much farther-reaching implications.² A 2006 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) suggests that investment in "the right farm policies" can reduce rural-to-urban migration as well as illegal immigration to more developed countries. Similarly, a 2006 World Bank Report found that "*The poor participate much more in growth in the agricultural sector, especially in low-income countries, resulting in much larger poverty reduction impact [from rural development]... enhancing agricultural productivity is the critical entry-point in designing effective poverty reduction strategies, including in Sub-Saharan Africa.*"³ Investment in rural development is a wide-reaching geo-economical tool, and one that ECOSOC must levy in order to achieve SDG 2.

Specifically, investment in rural development can be broken down into four critical actions, as given by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development:

- 1. Promoting poverty eradication in rural areas*
- 2. Promoting pro-poor planning and budgeting at the national and local levels;*
- 3. Addressing basic needs and enhancing provision of and access to services as a precursor to improve livelihoods and as an enabling factor of peoples engagement in productive activities;*
- 4. Providing social protection programmes to benefit, inter alia, the vulnerable households, in particular the aged, persons with disabilities and unemployed many of whom are in rural areas.*⁴

Actions passed by the committee should keep these steps in mind as a starting point.

It is in the interests of underdeveloped (and developing) countries, especially those in Africa, to receive foreign aid for rural development. A 2001 International Monetary Fund (IMF) report focused on the need for rural development in Africa, stating that "*Rural poverty accounts*

¹ "Goal 2 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs," United Nations (United Nations), accessed November 27, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal2>.

² "Rural Development | Department of Economic and Social Affairs," United Nations (United Nations), accessed November 27, 2022, <https://sdgs.un.org/topics/rural-development>.

³ "Rural Development Reports," United Nations (United Nations, 2006), <https://www.un.org/esa/coordination/Alliance/GlobalReports.htm>.

⁴ "E/2009/29-E/CN.17/2009/19 - Report on the 17th SES | Department of Economic and Social Affairs," United Nations (United Nations, 2009), <https://sdgs.un.org/documents/e200929-ecn17200919-report-17th-ses-18614>.

for nearly 63 percent of poverty worldwide, reaching 90 percent in some countries like Bangladesh and between 65 and 90 percent in sub-Saharan Africa."⁵ In the past 30 years, poverty rates in Africa have been decreasing slower than in other regions, including East and South Asia.⁶ Underdeveloped African nations may require foreign investment immediately in order to combat this poverty.

Developed countries are large givers of foreign aid, but some have expressed concerns about the processing of their foreign aid in agricultural sectors. In 2002, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) released a report which emphasized its apprehension about corrupt uses of its foreign aid money for rural development. Specifically, USAID showed concern that government organizations in transition economies would intercept its rural development investments for corrupt purposes. The report states that "*An emphasis on transparency, awareness, accountability, prevention, and enforcement*" is needed to combat this.⁷ This sentiment is an important tenet to keep in mind (for all developed countries) when considering giving foreign aid.

⁵ "Economic Issues No. 26--Rural Poverty in Developing Countries: Implications for Public Policy," International Monetary Fund, 2001, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues/issues26/>.

⁶ Marta Schoch and Cristoph Lakner, "The Number of Poor People Continues to Rise in Sub-Saharan Africa, despite a Slow Decline in the Poverty Rate," World Bank Blogs (World Bank, December 16, 2020), <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/number-poor-people-continues-rise-sub-saharan-africa-despite-slow-decline-poverty-rate>.

⁷ Rodney Fink, "Corruption and the Agricultural Sector," United States Agency for International Development (Management Systems International, November 2002), https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNACX273.pdf.

Topic 2: The Eradication of Poverty

In 1800, 81% of the world population fell below the poverty line established on a \$1.90 per day standard. 190 years later, in the year 1990, 44% of people across the globe were in poverty. That means there was a reduction in poverty by fewer than one-fifth of a percentage point each year. From 1962 to 1990, however, poverty was reduced by more than 1.2 percentage points to less than 10 percent each year. Delving deeper into the exact numbers, the poverty rate only fell 3 total percentage points and less than 1 percentage point every 15 years in the first half of the 1800s. Progress was made from 1850 to 1990, as the poverty rate fell 34 total percentage points and roughly 1 percentage point every 4 years.⁸ In the last 30 years, the worldwide poverty rate has decreased far more noticeably. As nations discuss how to maintain this progress, it is important to examine the history and recognize that the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction is more complex than one would generally think. For example, between 1977 and 1987, there was an annual increase of 6.2 percent in the per-capita household income in rural China. This economic growth did not directly translate over to the poverty rate, which only decreased by 5 total percentage points. The poverty rate did, however, decrease 50 percentage points from 1991 to 2001, at a rate 10 times as fast as the one previously mentioned.⁸

In addition to working towards the eradication of poverty, countries should strive to mitigate the effects of poverty. One issue nations need to pay more attention to is the effects of poverty on children. First and foremost, children's education and development are severely impacted by living in poverty. On average, children who live below the poverty line have cognitive development scores 20% less than other children. Gifted children from impoverished backgrounds begin to lose on-par performance by the age of 16. This is due to the fact that people living below the poverty line generally don't live in areas with properly funded education. In impoverished areas, males generally live 19 fewer years than their wealthier counterparts, while females generally live 20 fewer years than their wealthier counterparts. One reason for this is that people living in poverty don't have sufficient access to food and water, leading to widespread malnourishment in impoverished areas. As mentioned above, lack of access to education and poor quality of schools in impoverished areas leads to an uneducated population that is unlikely to receive well-paying jobs. In addition to this, the Millennium Cohort Study has revealed that children living in poverty are four times as likely to face mental health illnesses by the age of 11 than other children.⁹

When formulating a plan to eradicate poverty throughout the world, it is imperative that member nations take into consideration a lot of key things. First and foremost, many sources argue that one of the primary causes of extreme poverty is a lack of equality and representation. When marginalization occurs, it is very likely that said marginalized groups will face impoverishment due to their lack of representation in society. For example, the Food and

⁸ Rosnick, David. "A History of Poverty Worldwide." CEPR, 21 May 2019, www.cepr.shorthandstories.com/history-poverty/.

⁹ "The Effects of Poverty." CPAG, 9 Aug. 2019, www.cpag.org.uk/child-poverty/effects-poverty.

Agriculture Organization has determined that African and Asian women consist of 60% of people working in agriculture, but only own 20% of agricultural land. The former Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization publicly stated that:

“women are the backbone of our work in agriculture... when women have opportunities, the yields on their farms increase – also their incomes. Natural resources are better managed. Nutrition is improved. And livelihoods are more secured.”

Therefore, nations must consider marginalized populations, including but certainly not limited to females, ethnic minorities, racial minorities, indigenous peoples, and disabled persons.¹⁰

¹⁰ “7 Solutions to Poverty That Will Get Us to 2030: Concern Worldwide US.” Concern Worldwide, 24 Feb. 2020, www.concernusa.org/story/solutions-to-poverty/.

Questions To Consider (Both Topics):

- To what extent should ECOSOC be able to determine the economic and social policy within your nation?
- How can your nation play a role in rural development (internally or abroad) as soon as possible, and what do you need from other nations to make that happen?
- Where, specifically, should rural development investments go? How can the international community work together to ensure that those investments are being used correctly, without corruption?

Bloc Positions:

DEVELOPED ECONOMIES: Nations whose economies are wealthy, well developed and established in the business world. High quality of life for citizens, diverse number of industries driving the economy.

United States: Between 2013-2018, the US gave almost \$300 billion dollars in foreign aid. The interest of the United States, for the most part, is to export democracy and the rule of law abroad.

France: Their development budget is about 17 billion Euros or about \$19 billion. The French state gives this money mainly to northern and central african countries to support its geopolitical influence in Africa.

Germany: Foreign aid of about 24 billion dollars, mainly to India, China, and Syria- densely populated countries. Germany is a developed nation that seeks to improve the well being of developing countries. Germany represents the center of the European Union bloc. This bloc seeks to be a paragon for human rights and for how to correctly manage nations.

Sweden: Foreign aid of about 5 billion dollars in 2016, giving the largest amount of money per their population. Sweden is a donor focused on improving human rights and enforcing adequate democratic rule of law around the world. Sweden is focused on making sure developed nations can fix their economies and adjust them to the democratic standards of the Western world.

Switzerland: Foreign aid of about 3 billion dollars, Focused on at risk people and places in the world- aims to reduce poverty. Swiss interests are similar to Swedish interests when it comes to economically developing nations, investing money in nations that adhere to human rights standards outlined in the UN charter.

United Kingdom: Spent about 20 billion dollars on foreign aid, economic or otherwise, mainly to Pakistan, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and heavily on Yemen. The United Kingdom seeks

to reboot its geopolitical status in the world, to be a global nation again. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson established the notion of the possibility of returning to a “Global Britain.”

Norway: Has a foreign aid budget of about 4.29 billion dollars.

Canada: Dedicated to providing food assistance; in the Ukraine war it upped its 6 billion dollar plus foreign aid budget to give food to the food insecure in Africa and the Middle East.

MIDDLE AND TRANSITIONING ECONOMIES: Nations whose economies are reasonably developed, but not necessarily developed to the status of a high income economy.

Mexico: Similar to Saudi Arabia, Mexico is rich in oil but it depends less on the resource. On the flip side, Mexico has a higher poverty rate and therefore tends to be a net recipient of foreign aid.

China: A net donor of foreign loans to developing countries. Their foreign aid is bigger in scale than microloans. Interested in developing their sphere of influence, bankrupting developing countries by forcing them to pay back the loans given to them.

Russia: A net donor internationally. Seeks to be a balancing power in the middle east, mainly focused on donating military equipment to other countries. Economy is very weak but the military is strong. The Russians seek to exploit the economies of stabilized nations for their own geopolitical benefit.

Dominican Republic: A net receiver of foreign aid, the Dominican Republic is a developing nation which, although improving its economy, is still lagging behind in corruption.

India: Developing nation, wishes to invest more to improve its economy and then project its influence toward africa and to the world. Goal to be a superpower rivaling China and US but long way from achieving goals.

Morocco: developing nations, one of the most advanced countries in Africa but the goal is to be a developed nation like in Europe. Nations like France and Spain hold close economic connections to Morocco and help Morocco develop for geopolitical reasons as Morocco is not a democracy, violating the common western covenant.

Saudi Arabia: Although the nation has lots of petro carbons, the nation’s economy is primitive and overly dependent on oil, making it unable to exactly be classified as a developed economy. The nation’s focus is to diversify its economy particularly and in the grand scheme of things and invest in the economies of low income nations in order to increase Saudi geopolitical influence.

LOW INCOME NATIONS: Those receiving foreign aid; Low Income Nations have struggling and underdeveloped economies.

Zimbabwe: Depends, heavily, on other organizations and countries to help them, especially since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. Zimbabwe is also in a lot of debt and owes a lot of these organizations money.

Yemen: In recent years, Yemen has received much financial aid from the US because of the war and violence going on in the country. The United States remains the largest single donor of humanitarian assistance in Yemen, providing more than \$3.6 billion to alleviate suffering of the Yemeni people since the crisis began six years ago.

Syria: Very similar to Yemen because of the violence in the country, in a civil war. Weak economy under an authoritarian dictatorship Western developed nations.

Ethiopia: Was originally a high growing economy with great aspirations when a civil war between government and TPLF isolated Ethiopia from the international community economically. Seeks more aid from western nations to develop the country.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: In a civil war, similar to Ethiopia but for a longer length of time, seeks to develop the nation to be similar to western countries but hit roadblocks with tribal tensions. Continuously welcomes foreign aid from Western nations in order to develop or for officials to actually seize the monetary aid for their benefit, plaguing the nation as a whole.

Mozambique: USAID's 2019 assistance investment in Mozambique totaled \$288 million. Foreign aid in Mozambique is being used in several key developmental areas, such as education, humanitarian aid, and national health.

Kenya: Fast developing nation in East Africa. Receives an increasing amount of capital from nations such as India or China, wishes to turn into the financial center of Africa.

Ghana: Similar situation as Kenya, but retains closer ties to the United Kingdom, former colonial overlords of Ghana. Seek to be financial center and educational center of Africa

Bangladesh: Fast developing South East Asian country, actively seeks out clothing companies to develop in the nation. Although politics are dysfunctional, there is still hope for continuous growth as in the past.

Further Research:

Below are the sources we used to gather material for our background guide. I recommend using these sources for your position papers.

- [Country classification](#) (United Nations)
- [UN Charter | United Nations](#)
- [Fact Sheet: An Adjustment to Global Poverty Lines](#) (World Bank)
- [Rural Development Reports](#) (United Nations)
- [Decisions by Topic: Rural Development](#) (United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform)
- [Economic Issues No. 26--Rural Poverty in Developing Countries: Implications for Public Policy](#) (International Monetary Fund)
- [The number of poor people continues to rise in Sub-Saharan Africa, despite a slow decline in the poverty rate](#) (World Bank)
- [Rural Development - Overview](#) (United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform)
- [Corruption and the Agricultural Sector](#) (United States Agency for International Development)

France:

<https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20210306-france-shifts-policy-on-aid-to-africa-to-counter-rising-chinese-influence>

[https://donortracker.org/country/france#:~:text=French%20official%20development%20assistance%20\(ODA,%2C%20or%20US%249.2%20billion\).](https://donortracker.org/country/france#:~:text=French%20official%20development%20assistance%20(ODA,%2C%20or%20US%249.2%20billion).)

<https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/how-the-france-backed-african-cfa-franc-works-as-an-enabler-and-barrier-to-development/>

Sweden:

<https://www.government.se/articles/2017/02/new-strategy-for-humanitarian-aid/>.

China:

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/01/seven-years-into-chinas-belt-and-road/>

Saudi Arabia:

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/saudi-arabia-s-aid-world-reaches-nearly-33-billion-10-years>

Tanzania:

<https://borgenproject.org/how-the-us-benefits-from-foreign-aid-to-tanzania/>

<https://www.foreignassistance.gov/explore/country/Tanzania>

Russia:

<https://www.refworld.org/publisher,ECOSOC,STATEPARTIESREP,RUS,593aa6d44,0.html>

Switzerland:

<https://lenews.ch/2018/04/11/international-aid-switzerland-gives-less-but-still-8th-most-generous>

Zimbabwe:

<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/zimbabwes-foreign-aid/>

<https://www.usaid.gov/zimbabwe/history>

<https://reliefweb.int/report/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-s-exclusion-g20-debt-relief-must-not-block-assistance-covid-19-response>

United States:

<https://mz.usembassy.gov/u-s-government-commits-110-million-in-development-assistance-to-mozambique/#:~:text=U.S.%20Government%20commits%20%24110%20Million%20in%20Development%20Assistance%20to%20Mozambique,-Home%20%7C%20News%20%26%20Events>

Mozambique:

<https://borgenproject.org/foreign-aid-in-mozambique/>

Yemen:

<https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/aug-9-2021-usaid-announces-165-million-additional-humanitarian-assistance-yemen#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20remains%20the%20crisis%20began%20six%20years%20ago.>

South Africa:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/after-protests-looting-tear-through-south-africa-nation-woonders-what-n1275585>

United Kingdom:

<https://news.trust.org/item/20201120164622-38et5/>

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/inflection-points/boris-johnson-transforms-global-britain-slogan-into-an-inspiring-strategic-plan/>

Dominican Republic:

<https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/dominican-republic>

Kenya:

<https://www.theafricareport.com/136616/kenya-hopes-a-new-financial-centre-will-pull-in-global-investors/>

Ghana:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ghana/overview#1>

Bangladesh:

<https://www.adb.org/countries/bangladesh/economy>

Norway:

<https://www.norway.no/en/missions/UN/statements/general-assembly-plenary/2020/ecosoc-2019-2020-report/>

Mexico:

https://www.refworld.org/publisher_ECOSOC,,MEX,5881dbd94,0.html

Syria:

<https://www.heritage.org/index/country/syria>

Ethiopia:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ethiopia/overview>

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/august-2016/drc-economy-giant-awakens>

Germany:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/adamandrzejewski/2021/08/04/new-report-nearly-300-billion-in-foreign-aid-spent-by-us-government/?sh=180a81c64374>

More information on developing, transitional, and developed economies:

[Country classification](#)

Source for low income nations:

[List of Low-Income Countries](#)