



Committee: Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Topic A: What measures should be taken to achieve economic growth through sustainable development?

Committee description:

In 1946 the UN created the ECOSOC Council, which main purpose is to discuss or debate social, economic and environmental challenges the world faces. This Council has broad responsibility for some 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system: including 14 specialized agencies, 9 functional commissions, and 5 regional commissions. The Council's 54 member states are elected by the General Assembly. This member states gather each July in order to hold their annual month-long substantive session, either in New York, or in Geneva.

Introduction and description:

Sustainability is a way of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves the quality of life in a community, whether the economic, social and environmental systems that make up the community providing a healthy, productive and meaningful life for all residents, for present and future. Sustainability requires managing all households (individual, community, national, and global) in ways that ensure that our economy and society can continue existing without destroying the natural environment on which we all depend.

However, the record on moving towards sustainability so far appears to have been quite poor: sustainable development is an urgent issue. There are: 1.3 billion without access to clean water; about half of humanity lacking access to adequate sanitation and living on less than 2 dollars a day and approximately 2 billion without access to electricity. The inequality of consumption (and therefore, use of resources, which affects the environment) is terribly affected: "20% of the world's people in the highest-income countries account for 86% of total private consumption expenditures, the poorest 20% a minuscule 1.3%".

The economic challenge is a complex. It requires proper accounting of resource use, as well as addressing purposes of consumption.

Theme History:

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment took place in the summer of 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden, where issues of ecological nature were discussed. One of the key results of this historical meeting was the adoption by participants of a declaration of principles and action plan to fight pollution. It was further to this meeting that the United Nations Environment Program was founded.

On 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution agreeing to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012, also referred to as 'Rio 20'. The Conference seeks three objectives: securing renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assessing the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and addressing new and emerging challenges. The Member States have agreed on the following two themes for the Conference: green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and institutional framework for sustainable development.

Points of view

The crisis of sustainable development has become a matter of global security. Every country faces increasingly complex challenges of energy, food, and water security. Globalization and technological change have richly rewarded those at the top of the income distribution, but left a generation of young people in economic peril. Protests in cities around the world testify to the rising tensions of high levels of income inequality and joblessness.

Many of the world's conflict zones, in the Horn of Africa, Syria, and Western Asia, are dry land regions already suffering from rising hunger caused by falling rainfall intersecting with rising populations. Humanity is awakening to its challenge, late indeed but still not too late. The world can coalesce around a common agenda.

Case Study: "Brazil"

Brazil illustrates the full range of the significance and obstacles of sustainable development, which the UN defines as meeting "the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs... [through] economic development, social development and environmental protection." Brazil is a developing state, but it is the only one in Latin America included in the well-known BRICs group (Brazil, Russia, India, China), as a growing power symbolically shifting economic power from the G7. In obtaining this status and across its various activities, Brazil has become known for both environmental degradation and a relatively successful balancing of development and preservation. As Brazil continues to struggle with conflicting interests and makes mixed progress, it appears that proper incentives and accounting for economic considerations will be fundamental to change. Yet Brazil's example is also promising in that it has not

been satisfied with purely economic measures of success, and has recognized the need to set the bar higher and seek, if imperfectly, loftier goals.

Current Situation

As said before, green economy was one of the topics analyzed in “Rio-20”, and although the growing international interest in green economy, negotiations between Member States on the concept in the lead up to Rio+20 were challenging. This was partly due to the lack of an internationally agreed definition or universal principles for green economy, the emergence of interrelated but different terminology and concepts over recent years (such as green growth, low carbon development, sustainable economy, steady-state economy etc.), a lack of clarity around what green economy policy measures encompass and how they integrate with national priorities and objectives relating to economic growth and poverty eradication, as well as a perceived lack of experience in designing, implementing and reviewing the costs and benefits of green economy policies. Importantly, there is also emerging practice in the design and implementation of national green economy strategies by both developed and developing countries across most regions, including Africa, Latin America, the Asia-Pacific and Europe. This emerging practice can help to provide some important insights and much-needed clarity regarding the types of green economy policy measures, their scope with regard to various sectors and national priorities, and their institutional barriers, risks and implementation costs. This international experience may serve to alleviate concerns regarding the effective integration of green economy policies with national economic and social priorities and objectives, including the achievement of internationally agreed development goals.

Conclusion

Many actions are being taken, unfortunately it is not enough, nations are recklessly consuming our Earth and it is not fair for future generations yet to come. Sustainable development is a solution to many problems that are current, and international. Also, that sustainability is essential to be implemented if we care for future generations and the world that they would live in. Still the measures to be taken require a risk in the economy of every state, since achieving sustainability implies many effort and resources that may be unappealing to governments. It is imperative to the United Nations to open the eyes of nations, that there are existent methods or measures that can achieve sustainability without a negative impact on a nation, or even producing a positive outcome for the economy.

References:

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