

**DUMUNC XXXVI**  
**February 16-18, 2018**

**Economic and Social Council  
(ECOSOC)  
Background Guide**



## *Introduction from the Chair*

Dear ECOSOC delegates,

I am pleased to welcome you to DUMUNC 2018, and our committee in particular. For beginners and more experienced delegates alike, this committee will be a wonderful opportunity to develop your communication skills, incision, writing skills, and above all, problem-solving skills in the pursuit of global stability.

The field of international relations is becoming more and more significant in our day-to-day livelihoods amidst globalization, technological innovations, and disruptions to the state-based world order in which we reside. As these changes continue, and challenges arise, they bear significant implications on economic and social rights, standards, norms, and practices.

You will find it in your best interest to review sources such as UN.org and Encyclopedia, for historical background and reference. The World Economic Forum, Global Policy Forum, Council on Foreign Relations, World Health Organization, and authors such as Thomas Friedman and Anne Marie Slaughter, will offer critical insights to our topics.

This background guide will offer rudimentary level coverage of our three committee topics, chosen because of their pivotal relevance in our current political and global climate. The questions we will ask, ideas we will discuss, and solutions we create will have tangible relevance to today's world. I hope you are as excited for this conference as I am.

Warmly,

Sabriyya Pate

Chair, ECOSOC Committee

### ***Committee Topics:***

**Topic One:** Inequalities Brought on by Climate Change

**Topic Two:** Erosion of Democracies Globally with Delegitimization in Media Space

**Topic Three:** Ecological Changes that beget Religious and Ethnic Conflicts

### ***About Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)***

ECOSOC is responsible for coordinating the economic, social, and related work of 15 UN specialized agencies. It is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development.

#### ECOSOC Mandate:

- ECOSOC, one of the six main organs of the United Nations established by the United Nations Charter in 1946, is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.
- ECOSOC serves as the central mechanism for the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, and supervises the subsidiary and expert bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields.
- ECOSOC has undergone reforms in the last decade to strengthen the Council and its working methods, giving special attention to the integrated and coordinated implementation of, and follow-up to, the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences summits in the economic, social, environmental and related fields.  
*(Source: UN ECOSOC 2018)*

#### Statement by H.E. Ambassador Marie Chatardová, President of ECOSOC:

We see inclusion as a key element for societies' resilience in economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges this link with its commitment to leave no one behind. Therefore, a priority of my Presidency is to develop initiatives towards fostering sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through the participation of all.

#### Capabilities

- ECOSOC is a forum for policy dialogue
- Put forth recommendations on economic, social, and environmental issues
- Put forth plans for implementation of sustainable global developmental goals

## Challenges Facing ECOSOC

- Among several others, financing is a long-standing challenge for ECOSOC, which must rely on the contributions of member states and other contributors. As the committee considers resolutions, it will be critical to properly address external constrictions in development space.
- November 18, 2017 ECOSOC President Commentary on Financing Development:
  - <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/president/2017/opening-remarks-ecosoc-president-18-november-2017.pdf>
- ECOSOC Details on Financing for Development:
  - <http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/financing.shtml>

## ***Topic One: Inequalities Brought on by Climate Change***

In the latter half of 2017, United Nations member states were ravaged by Hurricanes Irma, Harvey, and Maria. Successive earthquakes in Mexico in the aftermath also escalated the devastation. UN senior officials have called for increased proactive and reactive actions to address disaster and manage climate risk at all levels.

ECOSOC's 2030 Agenda meeting facilitated a discussion on the current global situation in the aftermath of recent hurricanes, and considered the economic, social, and environmental impacts of these natural disasters on members of various affected states.

ECOSOC President Marie Chatardová noted, “these disasters led to tragic loss of lives, displaced people, damaged infrastructure and homes, and disrupted livelihoods in both developed and developing countries... We have seen how inequalities exacerbated people’s exposure to the impact of disaster.”

Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed added “the international community has a responsibility to support affected countries to become more resilient; to promote a risk-informed approach to reconstruction; and to strengthen their financial systems so they can cope with such large-scale shocks.”

The [United Nations Sustainable Knowledge Platform 2030 Agenda](#) will offer a guiding framework for this ECOSOC topic.

Summary of Fourth Industrial Revolution by Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of World Economic Forum:

The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power to mechanize production. The Second used electric power to create mass production. The Third used electronics and information technology to automate production. Now a Fourth Industrial Revolution is building on the Third, the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres.

The possibilities of billions of people connected by mobile devices, with unprecedented processing power, storage capacity, and access to knowledge, are unlimited. And these possibilities will be multiplied by emerging technology breakthroughs in fields such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the Internet of Things, autonomous vehicles, 3-D printing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, materials science, energy storage, and quantum computing.

### Gender Parity

Gender parity is fundamental to whether and how economies and societies thrive. Ensuring the full development and appropriate deployment of half of the world’s total talent pool has

a vast bearing on the growth, competitiveness and future-readiness of economies and businesses worldwide. The Global Gender Gap Report benchmarks 144 countries on their progress towards gender parity across four thematic dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment. In addition, this year's edition also analyses the dynamics of gender gaps across industry talent pools and occupations.

ECOSOC 2030 Agenda Statement:

Key industries and livelihoods must be made sustainable and resilient to the impacts of future extreme weather events and other hazards. We must support efforts of affected and vulnerable countries to diversify their economies and harness the benefits of digital economy to enhance their economic resilience.

Our mission is to put this agenda statement to action.

***Sources***

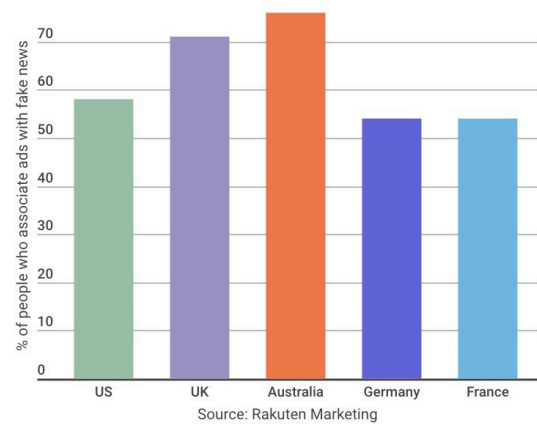
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## ***Topic Two: Erosion of Democracies Globally with Delegitimization in Media Space***

Nations throughout the world have increasingly engaged in media repression, censorship, and election meddling in recent decades. The erosion of the right to public communication is a threat to the democratic institutions in which the will of a diverse peoples are effectively represented in institutions of governance.

One consequence of this has been decreased consumer trust. Online advertising is regarded as a disruptive experience by 83 percent of the 2,500 people polled by Rakuten Marketing. Brits and Australians are more scathing toward ads than Americans or other Europeans, associating them with other negative online experiences like fake news, compared to 54 percent of people in France and Germany and 58 percent in the U.S, according to the same report. A total 80 percent of all respondents said online advertising hasn't gotten any better with time, on any device or platform.



Furthermore, a Harvard Business School survey found that globally, trust has declined in business, media, government, and non-governmental organizations. The social and cultural implications of this may affect the global conception, self-conception, and functioning of ECOSOC and the United Nations entity as a whole.

The Edelman Trust Barometer was used with tens of thousands of people across dozens of countries in various industries. The 2017 findings reflect the first time trust had declined in all four institutions of business, media, government, and non-governmental organizations. The survey also discovered a staggering “lack of confidence in leadership: 71% of survey respondents said government officials are not at all or somewhat credible, and 63% said the same about CEOs. The credibility of CEOs fell by 12 points this year, to 37% globally” (*HBR, 2017*).

Summary of Fourth Industrial Revolution by Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of World Economic Forum:

### *Challenges and opportunities*

Like the revolutions that preceded it, the Fourth Industrial Revolution has the potential to raise global income levels and improve the quality of life for populations around the world. To date, those who have gained the most from it have been consumers able to afford and access the digital world; technology has made possible new products and services that

increase the efficiency and pleasure of our personal lives. Ordering a cab, booking a flight, buying a product, making a payment, listening to music, watching a film, or playing a game—any of these can now be done remotely.

In the future, technological innovation will also lead to a supply-side miracle, with long-term gains in efficiency and productivity. Transportation and communication costs will drop, logistics and global supply chains will become more effective, and the cost of trade will diminish, all of which will open new markets and drive economic growth.

At the same time, as the economists Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee have pointed out, the revolution could yield greater inequality, particularly in its potential to disrupt labor markets. As automation substitutes for labor across the entire economy, the net displacement of workers by machines might exacerbate the gap between returns to capital and returns to labor. On the other hand, it is also possible that the displacement of workers by technology will, in aggregate, result in a net increase in safe and rewarding jobs.

We cannot foresee at this point which scenario is likely to emerge, and history suggests that the outcome is likely to be some combination of the two. However, I am convinced of one thing—that in the future, talent, more than capital, will represent the critical factor of production. This will give rise to a job market increasingly segregated into “low-skill/low-pay” and “high-skill/high-pay” segments, which in turn will lead to an increase in social tensions.

In addition to being a key economic concern, inequality represents the greatest societal concern associated with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The largest beneficiaries of innovation tend to be the providers of intellectual and physical capital—the innovators, shareholders, and investors—which explains the rising gap in wealth between those dependent on capital versus labor. Technology is therefore one of the main reasons why incomes have stagnated, or even decreased, for a majority of the population in high-income countries: the demand for highly skilled workers has increased while the demand for workers with less education and lower skills has decreased. The result is a job market with a strong demand at the high and low ends, but a hollowing out of the middle.

This helps explain why so many workers are disillusioned and fearful that their own real incomes and those of their children will continue to stagnate. It also helps explain why middle classes around the world are increasingly experiencing a pervasive sense of dissatisfaction and unfairness. A winner-takes-all economy that offers only limited access to the middle class is a recipe for democratic malaise and dereliction.

Discontent can also be fueled by the pervasiveness of digital technologies and the dynamics of information sharing typified by social media. More than 30 percent of the global population now uses social media platforms to connect, learn, and share information. In an ideal world, these interactions would provide an opportunity for cross-cultural understanding



and cohesion. However, they can also create and propagate unrealistic expectations as to what constitutes success for an individual or a group, as well as offer opportunities for extreme ideas and ideologies to spread.

*(Schwab, World Economic Forum)*

### **Sources**

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<https://hbr.org/2017/01/survey-peoples-trust-has-declined-in-business-media-government-and-ngos>

### ***Topic Three: Ecological Changes that beget Religious and Ethnic Conflicts***

#### The Center For The Study Of Religion and Conflict

Recent violence in South Sudan, Mali, Nigeria, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Myanmar, China, and Russia focuses attention of ethnic and religious-based conflict as sources of contemporary global political instability. Conflicts, ranging from immigrant-native tensions to civil wars, can go unsettled for decades. Moreover, political institutions designed to mitigate ethnic tensions have often failed to keep extremist actors at bay. This mobilization along ethnic and religious lines is expressed via both violent and non-violent means and is linked to many of the most destructive conflicts in recent history.

*(Center for The Study of Religion and Conflict, 2015)*

#### Ecological changes and the future of the human species: can physicians make a difference? (Roger A. Rosenblatt, Annals of Family Medicine):

Global environmental change is occurring so rapidly that it is affecting the health and threatening the future of many of Earth's inhabitants, including human beings. Global warming; contamination of the air, water, and soil; and rampant deforestation have led to a collapse in biodiversity that threatens the integrity of the biophysical systems upon which all organisms depend.

A basic cause of environmental degradation is human overpopulation and the non-sustainable consumption of natural resources by the human community. Everything that we have accomplished in the fields of medicine and public health could be undermined if we do not pay attention to these rapid environmental changes. As healers, human beings, and members of the biological community, we need to broaden our perspective on health and disease. Unless we devote our attention to stabilizing and repairing the ecosystem, our professional and personal accomplishments as health professionals may be swept away.

Health care providers--particularly physicians--can play a role by adopting an ecosystem health perspective as we ply our trade. By helping people avoid unwanted pregnancies, by using resources parsimoniously, and by staying engaged in the natural world, we can help to prevent the collapse of the biological systems upon which we all depend.

#### *Night Sweats and Fevers: Global Warming*

Human production of greenhouse gases—in particular carbon dioxide, methane, and the chlorofluorocarbons—has led to increases in Earth's surface temperature. Global warming is a reality, and the inevitable rise in carbon dioxide alone will lead to further increases in mean global temperature of 2°F to 10°F this century. The problem is even more acute in the growing number of mega-cities in which the human population increasingly clusters. These population centers become heat islands that are 7°F to 10°F hotter than the surrounding countryside.

The consequences of global warming will have profound effects on Earth and its inhabitants. Rising sea levels will cause flooding of low-lying islands and coastal communities. Heat itself causes devastating heat waves. The 2003 summer heat wave in France killed 10 times more people than died from severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) worldwide between 2002 and 2004. This climate change is very likely to increase the range of insect vectors that carry a number of virulent diseases, including malaria, dengue fever, West Nile virus, and encephalitis.

The greatest culprit is the burning of fossil fuels to run our cars, factories, and the air conditioners with which we attempt to survive the heat waves that cause these global night sweats. As the developing world strives to match the lifestyles of the Western world, the problem will accelerate.

### *Alopecia: Deforestation*

Alopecia areata, hair loss attributed to the mistaken attack by immune systems, is mirrored in the deforestation of our globe. In the Amazon, forests are burned to allow crops to be planted, even though the thin soil is depleted after one or two crop rotations. In Nepal and Central America, growing rural populations walk farther each day from their villages to cut firewood from the dwindling forests. In Africa, drought and global warming feed the expanding deserts. In the 1990s alone, human activities led to the loss of more than 500,000 square miles of forests.

The story of Easter Island illustrates how much our well-being is tied to the trees that support our world in more than a metaphoric way. Polynesians colonized the island in the fifth century, attracted in part by existing forests that seemed to offer an inexhaustible supply of wood to build houses, sea-going canoes, and the log rollers that allowed them to construct the fantastic stone monuments for which the island is famous. The entire civilization collapsed several generations later largely because the trees were harvested unsustainably, leading to mass famine when the Easter islanders could not replace the canoes upon which their fishery depended. The Polynesians who cut the trees did not imagine the catastrophic consequences of deforestation for their once-thriving civilization.

### *Dermatitis: Overpopulation*

The world's population has grown from fewer than a 100 million people 3,000 years ago to 6.3 billion people today, with two thirds of the increase in the last 50 years. By the year 2050 the world population is projected to range from 7.4 billion to 10.6 billion people. The rapid growth in human population, and the increased resource consumption generated both by the sheer number of humans and the rapid pace of development has transformed Earth and altered the basic geochemical cycles upon which life depends.

Although it may seem demeaning to think of the human species as a form of lice, our collective impact on the surface of the globe is even greater than that of scabies on the skin

of our hapless patient. The human population has not only affected Earth's crust and the thin organic layer that covers it, but human activities have also depleted and polluted ground water, altered the chemistry of the atmosphere, and changed the genetic composition of much of the plant life growing on the planet. The population burden of humans affects our own species as well as those with whom we share the globe.

Overpopulation not only drives environmental degradation but can contribute to poverty, social polarization, and large-scale human migration. Stabilization of Earth's human population is an important first step in any attempt to restore equilibrium to our natural and social processes.

*(RA Rosenblatt, NIH)*

Summary of Fourth Industrial Revolution by Written Klaus Schwab, Founder and Executive Chairman of World Economic Forum:

*The impact on people*

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, finally, will change not only what we do but also who we are. It will affect our identity and all the issues associated with it: our sense of privacy, our notions of ownership, our consumption patterns, the time we devote to work and leisure, and how we develop our careers, cultivate our skills, meet people, and nurture relationships. It is already changing our health and leading to a "quantified" self, and sooner than we think it may lead to human augmentation. The list is endless because it is bound only by our imagination.

One of the greatest individual challenges posed by new information technologies is privacy. We instinctively understand why it is so essential, yet the tracking and sharing of information about us is a crucial part of the new connectivity. Debates about fundamental issues such as the impact on our inner lives of the loss of control over our data will only intensify in the years ahead. Similarly, the revolutions occurring in biotechnology and AI, which are redefining what it means to be human by pushing back the current thresholds of life span, health, cognition, and capabilities, will compel us to redefine our moral and ethical boundaries.

*(Schwab, World Economic Forum, 2017)*

## **Important Sources**

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