



*Harmonizing and integrating
global primary education*

ECOSOC

United Nations

Table of contents

Letter from the Chair.....	3
Committee description.....	4
Topic Description.....	5
Education in developing countries.....	6
Education in warzone.....	9
Useful links.....	12
Closing remarks.....	13

Distinguished delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 6th session of the Žilina Model United Nations conference 2018. My name is Emma Paulínyová and as a chairperson, I will guide you through the sessions of the Economic and Social Council. I am more than thrilled to meet you all and to be part of the fruitful and enriching debates led by you, dear delegates.

This year's topic of *Harmonizing and integrating global primary education* touches, I believe, all of us. As students, we have the chance to witness more complex issue of education than math homework or finals. The difference between lack of education opportunities for children in developing countries or war zones versus the educational system of developed states is beyond belief. And minimising the gap between those two will be your mission.

To ease your task, I, together with my co-chair, have prepared rather detailed and complex study guide for you. We strongly recommend all of you to read it attentively and to explore the readings and useful videos we included at the end of this document. The less you prepare yourself, the more challenging the sessions will be for you and also, for us. Please, take this event as an opportunity and challenge to elaborate your English and to exercise your argumentation skills, as also for us as students of a French and Spanish bilingual study programme, and meeting new people is always exciting opportunity, so that is definitely a great bonus.

I hope you will find this topic and the whole committee interesting and enjoyable. We promise we will do our best to provide you with just marvellous memories. Before then, we wish you the best of luck.

Yours chair and co-chair

Emma Paulínyová and Samuel Nguyen

Committee description

The Economical and Social Council (ECOSOC) was founded in 1946 and represents one of six main organs of United Nations General Assembly. The ECOSOC was established to ensure the sustainable development of economic, environmental and social dimension. The Council creates an umbrella body to numerous UN entities dedicated to overall guidance and cooperation of sustainable development. The agenda of ECOSOC contains amongst others the promotion of sustainable development, its financing, coordination of humanitarian action and raising awareness on emerging issues. The sessions take place either in New York or Geneva annually in July. ¹

¹ More information about sessions or issues of ECOSOC; <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/about-us>

Topic description

The United Nations Secretary-General introduced the five-year Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in September 2012 to accelerate progress towards the education-related Millennium Development Goals. Thus, the initiative, which aimed to put quality, relevant and transformative education at the heart of the social, political and development agendas, ceased in late 2017. To this day, UN did not develop a new strategy regarding education apart from the Agenda of UNESCO², which is non-obligatory proposal and is not full filled. The ECOSOC as a frontrunner in development is now responsible for new agenda on Global primary education.

The situation of educational programme in war-zones and developing states is critical. The experts estimate that by 2030, 60 000 000 primary school-aged children will be out of school, half of which will be from sub-Saharan countries.³ United nations need to take action and guarantee the education opportunities for kids in war-zones and developing countries. In conjunction with that, ECOSOC will try to secure the quality of education given in these circumstances to match the developed education systems as much as possible. [/002456/245656E.pdf](#)

² <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>)

³ The children and sustainable development; <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/children/index.html>

Education in developing countries

One of the many issues, that developing countries show as problematic, is unfortunately the education. The situation mainly in sub-Saharan Africa proves to be beyond critical. In numbers it means, that more than 150 million children in the developing world (understand sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East and North Africa) start school but do not complete four years.⁴ In conjunction with this horrific statistic, three-fifths of school-aged kids out of primary school are females.⁵ As a consequence of us not being able to provide the suitable primary education, the Agenda of 2063, which is heavily based on acknowledged and educated individuals of all of the Africa, could be in danger.⁶ None of these goals will be achieved unless the peace providers are educated or citizens can't grow not only physically, but also mentally.



⁴ Situation analysis; https://www.cgdev.org/files/2844_file_EDUCATON1.pdf

⁵ Developing education in numbers; https://www.unicef.org/education/bege_70640.html

⁶ Agenda 2063 and growth of the Africa; <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/africa/index.html>

Apart from environment difference between developed and developing countries, one of the biggest gap is in investment per child. This leads to a contrast where U.S. spends \$6,800 p.a. per student of primary school and the government of Rwanda \$19. The consequence of poor contribution into education shows in the fact that the percentage of children enrolling to first grade is historically low- 31% in Ethiopia, 30% in Niger and 53% in Sudan. These numbers are lower than the same statistic made in U.S. in 1776.³ The initiative *Education can not wait* further states that „In 2015, humanitarian response plans identified nearly 40 million children and youth in need of education. Education appeals targeted just 45 per cent of those in need and only 12 per cent were reached because of a lack of funding. Education is not only rarely considered in donors’ strategic plans for emergencies. It is also not addressed in the national educational plans for two thirds of the countries affected by crisis. ”

The quality of education given

The situation has improved since the Security- General of UN in 2012 acknowledged the problem. The financial aid from Member states helped to build schools, provide school supplies and finance the scholarships for thousands of children. However, the quality of classroom environment is yet to be enhanced. The countries suffer from shortage of teachers by 1,6 million qualified male and female employees. Already existing schools lack adequate classrooms and learning materials, so teachers have to lead the lessons with outdated textbooks of insufficient amounts oftentimes outdoors.

⁷ This adds up to massive difference between developed and developing education programmes and in consequence adds up to the disadvantage of children from sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

⁷ The whole list of quality problems listed by UNESCO; <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/gefi/priorities/quality-of-learning/>

Fast track Initiative was established with the vision of help for the poorest countries to improve the education. Within this initiative, Netherlands donated \$220 million to launch initiative, followed by Belgium, Norway and Italy.

Humanitarian Aid. Member states allocate financial assistance for matters such as building schools, training teachers, and providing school supplies. On average, U.S. donated \$256 million and France donated \$856 million per year to basic education in poor countries. Apart from financial donations, organisations such as UNICEF, focus their effort on reaching the most excluded children, to the benefit of all children. However, education still add up to less than 2% of humanitarian aid.⁸

So far, there was not a specific declaration on this topic following one from 2012. United Nations tries to implement the SDG goal 4 as its main agenda (described earlier).

⁸ Education can not wait initiative; <http://www.educationcannotwait.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ECW-Investment-Case.pdf>

Education in war- zones

War is always a tragedy marking generations and education is not an exception. The year 2017 was one of the worst regarding the school attacks related to war.

Virginia Gamba, the UN special representative for children in armed conflict, told an informal UN Security Council meeting in New York that the rate of documented attacks had risen in 2017, compared with the 753 verified attacks on schools and hospitals in all of 2016. Gamba cited deadly and traumatic situations for school-age children in Yemen, South Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Targeting schools ranks as a violation of international humanitarian law. In 15 of the 20 nations, troops or rebel forces had seized schools for military purposes. Schoolgirls were often hindered from attending school or killed to halt female education. Joy Bishara, one of Nigeria's kidnapped Chibok girls, told the meeting that her attackers had repeatedly said "do not go to school." After her ordeal, she said she never felt safe. Gamba said her office had verified 174 attacks on schools in Congo between April and June, mostly in its southern Kasai region, the scene of dissent against President Joseph Kabila. "It will take years, if not decades, before this region and its children recover from the lost educational opportunities as a result of just three short months of violence," she said.⁹

The situation is unfortunately not a new one. Due to the constant conflicts and terrorist attacks that are happening on regular basis in the war-torn countries, the lack of education opposes a grave threat to the populations in them. According to the UN Special Envoy for Global Education Gordon Brown, schools and children are being used as weapons for war and also as targets for striking terror, increasingly. Reports say that about 50 million young people and children in the areas, that are involved in conflicts, are out of school, children of primary age consist more than a half of it.

Despite the grave impact of conflicts on the education of young people, reports say that the humanitarian funding that is headed towards education is really small and insufficient. In 2011, the resources determined to education represented no more than 2% of overall humanitarian funding. However even this low starting point later fell to 1,4% in the year 2012.

School attacks

Report say that one particularly damaging and often ignored effect of conflict on education is the proliferation of attacks on schools. Children, teachers or school buildings very often become the

⁹ Citation; <http://www.dw.com/en/un-2017-may-be-record-year-for-attacks-on-schools/a-40949342>

targets of attacks. Schools are in danger when they are converted into military bases and barracks, interrogation and detention centers, and caches for ammunition and weapons, as they have in the past decades in over 28 countries that are experiencing armed conflict. Even if the school is not a target for violence, the presence of troops undermines the education. Parents fear sending their children to school. Girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence that oppose a threat in conflict zones.

In 2012, there were 3,600 documented attacks on education including violence, torture and intimidation against children and teachers that resulted in serious injuries or death, the shelling and bombing of schools. School-aged children are also often times recruited by armed groups.

Syria

Over 3,900 schools have been destroyed, damaged or occupied for purposes other than education since the start of the conflict in 2011.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo

250 schools were put out of use in the year 2012, largely by the M23 rebels, either as a result of shooting or purposes of military character. More than 240,000 students ended up without the possibility of schooling for months.

Central African Republic

Following the Séléka rebel coalition's takeover of the country in April,2013, more than half of the country schools remain closed. This jeopardized the education of 1 million children as a result.

Mali

Following widespread attacks, more than 1,500 schools in the country need repair, removal of weapons and new equipment. The conflict has disrupted the education of more than 700,000 children.

RESULTS OF LACK OF EDUCATION

UNICEF 's head of education, Jo Bourne, claims that when children are not in schools, they are exposed to increased danger of exploitation, abuse or recruitment into armed groups. School equip. Unable to learn even the very basics reading and writing skills, they are at risk of losing their futures and missing out opportunity to contribute to their economics and societies when they reach adulthood. Therefore, education is the key to prosperity.

THE FOREIGN AID

Save the Children NGO called on world leaders to protect and help the education by criminalizing attacks, prohibiting the use of schools and education facilities by armed groups, and working with schools and communities in order to preserve schools as centres for learning - especially in a conflict. Furthermore, it urged the international community to cover the cash gap by increasing the funding of education to a new minimum that would consist 4% of the total global humanitarian funding.

In 2015, global consensus was solidified around the "Safe Schools Declaration" that which is an international political commitment that was drafted under the leadership of the governments of Norway and Argentina. The declaration establishes six common-sense actions that countries can and should take to better respond to school attacks and to also make it less likely that schools will be targeted.

In order to follow the declaration a greater understanding of the negative consequences for children's safety and their education is also required, so those factors can be appropriately weighed in decisions of a military character. That's the reason why the Safe Schools Declaration encourages all armed forces to include explicit protections for schools and education center in their training, planning and doctrine.

So far, 72 countries have joined the Safe Schools Declaration, most recently Yemen and El Salvador. The declaration includes the majority of NATO member states and the majority of the states that are in the European Union, and also many other countries that are currently or were recently at war.

Useful links

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

<http://www.bmz.de/en/issues/Education/hintergrund/bildungsfoerderungNational/index.html>

SDGS 4. EDUCATION - INSPIRATION FOR GOALS, YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE WITH YOUR RESOLUTION

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

INCHEON DECLARATION AND FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002456/245656E.pdf>

SAFE SCHOOLS DECLARATION ENDORSEMENTS

<https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/development-cooperation/protecting-education-endorsed/id2460245/>

HOW LACK OF EDUCATION AFFECTS CHILDREN

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-12/kids-in-conflict-zones-risk-losing-their-future/7083288>

SCHOOLS IN WAR ZONES

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/03/20/schools-war-zones-protection-needed>

HOW WAR AFFECTS AND DENYES EDUCATION

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2013/jul/12/war-denying-children-education>

CHILDREN GETTING AN EDUCATION IN WAR ZONES

<http://www.euronews.com/2014/11/21/the-children-getting-an-education-in-a-war-zone>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/education-in-war-zones>

THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/11/what-can-we-do-to-protect-education-in-war-zones/>

Closing Remarks

Taking into the consideration the debates during the sessions, the final outcome of the committee should unify the primary education across the United Nations member states. At this point, I would once again highlight the importance of your preparation for the committee. We all look forward to the challenging yet enriching debates, which can't be held without the crucial information.

Be aware, that this study guide serves as an introduction into the situation and the fluidity and quality of the debates vastly depend on your knowledge and preparation. So please, use this document and further links in the Useful links and footnotes sections as much as possible to ensure your active participation in the debate. Also, please remember to send the position paper of your country to paulinyova.e@gmail.com until 7th of April to get the feedback and correction.

I wish you the very best of luck in your preparations. In case of uncertainty or if you have any questions about the committee and your responsibilities, please feel free to contact me via email listed above or on Facebook. I am thrilled to finally meet you in my beautiful hometown of Žilina in April and looking forward to your fruitful debates.