

The UN Development Programme

A United Nations General Assembly Committee



Fall 2018

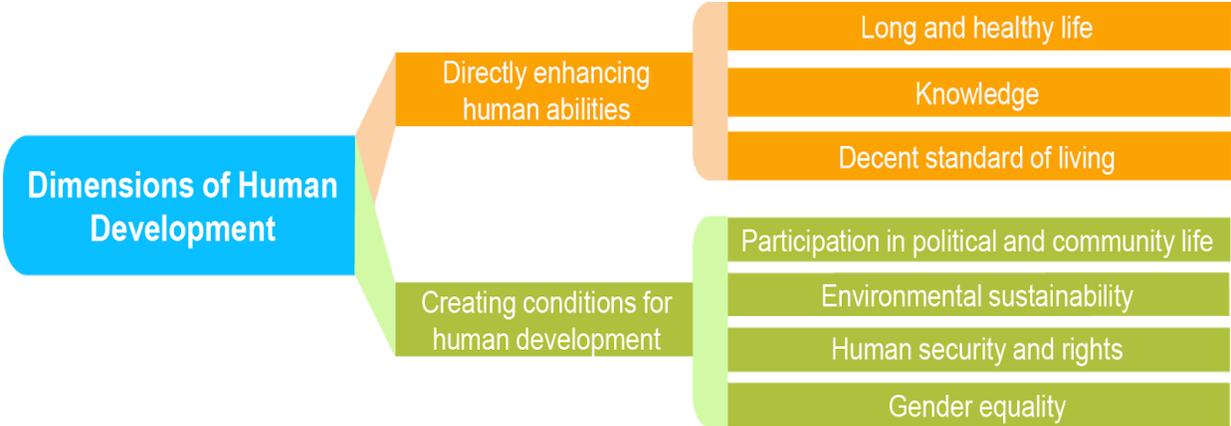
Sponsored by The Collegiate Council on World Affairs



CCWA

Committee Introduction

Founded in 1965, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) serves as the United Nations’ network for global development. Working in over 170 countries, UNDP works to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life in developing countries through focuses on sustainable development, democratic government and peacebuilding, and climate and disaster resilience¹. Though there is no universal definition for what constitutes a developing country, the UNDP currently groups countries by “their level of development as measured by per capita gross income²” along with considerations from the Human Development Index, which measures the quality of life in a country through a development lens. This approach, pioneered by economist Mahbub Ul Haq, considers measurements of the ability to which people are able to “be” and “do” desirable things during the course of their life. These two categories are considered the bedrocks of human development, by “articulating the objectives of development and improving people’s well-being by ensuring an equitable, sustainable and stable planet.³”



¹ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/about-us.html>

² http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2014wesp_country_classification.pdf

³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/what-human-development>

This work is carried out in conjunction with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, first adopted in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. Meant as an overarching sustainability-driven agenda to follow the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals include targets centered around poverty, hunger, social justice, and climate change⁴. Though efforts to achieve these goals are often localized, the UN Development Programme supports these efforts at an agency level through their work on poverty reduction, especially in least developed countries.



To help contribute to these goals, the UN Development Programme works to build regional and local capacity in poverty-eradication efforts, gives assistance through its administration of the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), builds partnerships with international and multilateral organizations involved in sustainable development efforts, and oversees the United Nations Volunteers program and the UN Development Group⁵. Its main

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/4538pressowg13.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/programmes-and-initiatives.html>

outputs come in the form of policy recommendations, local capacity-building, and localized development projects. Through these efforts, the UNDP is able to work at an international and regional level to build partnerships with public and private actors, while also having on the ground impact through its volunteer efforts.

Currently, the UNDP' strategic plan includes successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, as well as promoting internal accountability mechanisms to increase the quality of service delivered and innovative practices that continue to evolve with the organization. It casts its immediate priorities as “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, accelerating structural transformations for sustainable development, and building resilience to crises and shocks to safeguard developmental gains⁶”. As one of the preeminent UN bodies, UNDP holds a unique position in its ability to have a tangible impact upon the populations that require United Nations assistance the most.

This committee will focus on two issues that currently present issues to the sustainable development efforts of the United Nations and affect populations in developing countries worldwide. The first topic is *Economic Development in Land-Locked Countries* while the second is *Disaster Risk Reduction*. These topics will require delegates to analyze global development issues as recommend efficient, accountable, and innovative policy solutions. Delegates are encouraged to use various parts of the UNDP's activities as well as the larger resources of the United Nations in aim of those solutions. Though the topics may be broad, delegates are recommended to relate these issues to the broader mission of building partnerships and institutional capacity in the name of sustainable development. As such, delegates should examine

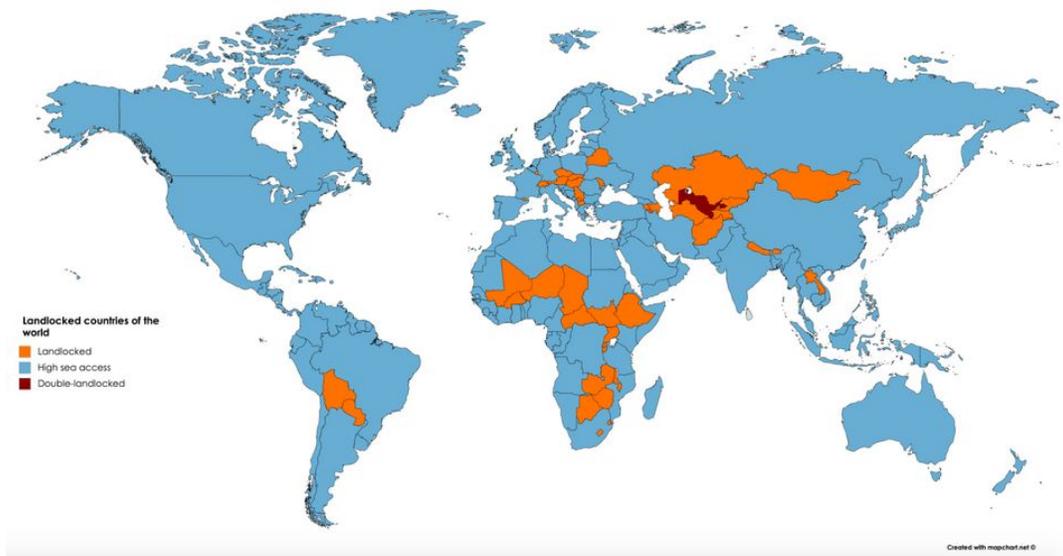
⁶ <http://undocs.org/DP/2017/38>

the following questions as they write their position papers: What is your country's specific development strategy? What is the moral responsibility of nations to address these issues? To what extent is your country affected by the issues mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals? Most importantly, what innovative ideas can your country bring to committee to support the UNDP's efforts towards sustainable development?

Topic 1: Economic Development in Landlocked Countries

Introduction

Throughout history, the geographic position of countries have had a significant influence upon their economic needs and foreign policy. Geopolitics scholars contend that diplomatic and political power is in large part linked to the geographic space that countries occupy, specifically in reference to their territorial land holdings and territorial waters⁷. Factors such as climate, topography, and natural resources have also had a large impact upon the economic development of nations⁸. One group of countries that has experienced significant barriers to development as a result of their geographic position is landlocked countries. There are currently 49 landlocked countries in the world, with the majority located in Eurasia. These landlocked countries are either entirely enclosed within land or have coastlines on closed seas. With this geographic position come a set of unique economic and political hindrances that often stymie development.



⁷ Friedman, N. (2001). *Seapower as Strategy: Navies and National Interests*. Naval Institute Press.

⁸ https://www.e-jei.org/upload/JEI_27_4_505_519_714.pdf

Current Status of Landlocked Countries

Many landlocked countries are classified as Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) by the United Nations, due to the specific barriers to development that persist within them. The vast majority of least developed countries (LDCs), classified as such by the United Nations due to their low Human Development Index scores, are landlocked countries. With an estimated population of nearly 500 million living within the LLDC classification, they remain a continued concern to the United Nations Development Programme.

Currently, 17 countries hold Landlocked Least Developed Country status, characterized by the UN Conference on Trade and Development as being “highly disadvantaged in their development process for structural, historic, and geographic reasons...[with] vulnerability to external economic shocks, natural and man-made disasters and communicable diseases⁹”. Due to the severe handicaps to economic growth and development, these Landlocked Least Developed Countries must be considered a priority in development goals and policy recommendations created by the United Nations Development Programme.

Economic Barriers Found in Landlocked Countries

There are a number of specific barriers to development found in landlocked countries, mainly due to their geographic position. This geographic position and lack of access to territorial waters not only affects the infrastructure needed within the country to promote economic activity and trade, but also its diplomatic relations with the countries that surround it. The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) released a 2015

⁹ <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/ALDC/Least%20Developed%20Countries/LDCs.aspx>

report on the development costs of landlocked countries, which highlighted a number of barriers to economic development found in landlocked developing countries and least developed countries across the world¹⁰:

Overall Macroeconomic Performance

In terms of macroeconomic economic development, landlocked developing countries develop more slowly behind coastal developing countries. LLDCs also often have higher rates of macroeconomic indicators such as unemployment and inflation.

Trade Facilitation

As described by the World Health Organization in 2017, “to reach international markets, goods must be transported over land, resulting in greater costs than those experienced by countries with direct access to maritime ports. Land travel requires investment in rail or road infrastructure as without either, the cost of importing or exporting is prohibitively expensive.”¹¹ Additionally, the cost and delay of facilitating trade from LLDCs is significantly larger than developing countries with coastal borders.

Trade Diversification

Research by the UN Conference on Trade and Development has found a more narrow range of exports in the international trade flows of LLDCs, which often rely upon primary commodities such as raw and unprocessed materials that require little processing.

¹⁰ <http://www.lldc2conference.org/custom-content/uploads/2014/04/Dev-Costs-of-landlockedness11.pdf>

¹¹ <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/255803/WHO-CCU-17.09-eng.pdf>

Diplomatic Ramifications

LLDCs are also “dependent on the infrastructure, stability, administrative processes, and political relations of their neighbouring transit countries in order to import and export goods.”¹² They may additionally be required to pay tariffs to countries that transport their goods.

UN Response

The United Nations has made the sustainable and accelerated development of landlocked developing countries a priority in recent years. This first came about with the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2007, which emphasized transit cooperation between landlocked countries and their neighbors¹³. Following this was the 2014 Vienna Programme of Action, which served as a ten-year blueprint for the development of LLDCs which underscores a global commitment to aid LLDCs in “promoting structural economic transformation in LLDCs and easing trade facilitation”¹⁴

Questions to Consider

1. How do the UN and member states prioritize various components of economic development in landlocked countries?
2. How do transit-developing countries (those bordering landlocked countries) aid landlocked countries in development through trade?
3. How do we encourage cooperation between regional economic groups such as ECOWAS and the ECE in promoting economic development in landlocked countries?

¹² <https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/AWP%20No.%2084.pdf>

¹³ http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/osce/osceunece/misc_Almaty_ProgrammeOfAction.pdf

¹⁴ <http://unohrlls.org/>

Topic 2: Disaster Risk Reduction

Introduction

Considered a vital component to sustainable economic and social development, disaster risk reduction (DRR) has become a major priority of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations itself in recent years. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a keystone document of the United Nations, recognizes the need for comprehensive disaster risk management and reduction throughout the world. Natural disasters, which can include “hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, tsunamis, and floods, as well as extreme weather events such as blizzards, droughts, extreme heat, and wind storms” often have adverse economic and social effects upon the affected population¹⁵. These effects, which can include displacement, destruction of home and property, economic strain, and medical injuries, have significant impact on the development of a region or community.

Disaster risk reduction is especially needed within many developing countries, where poor infrastructure and insufficient government response in the wake of natural disasters can lead to far higher rates of casualty and loss among its population. Not only is the human cost of natural disasters disproportionately high in lower-income countries, the economic impact of natural disasters can also threaten the development of that country’s macroeconomy. The World Bank estimated in 2017 that 26 million people were trapped in extreme poverty due to the economic effects of natural disasters each year¹⁶. Thus, improving resilience to natural disasters

¹⁵ <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/disasters>

¹⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2017/10/11/time-to-insure-developing-countries>

and post-disaster response has become a primary objective of the United Nations Development Programme.

UN Response

With the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safe World in 1994 serving as the first comprehensive global framework for natural disaster reduction, the United Nations has prioritized disaster risk reduction as a key component of sustainable development. This pattern has continued with the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in the early 2000s and the recent Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.¹⁷ The Sendai Framework, a non-binding document which , promotes stakeholder involvement at local, regional, and national levels to reduce losses and damage following natural disasters, is managed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). It includes several global targets aimed around reducing economic and human loss as well as four priorities for action that emphasize institutionalizing disaster risk governance and promoting investment in disaster risk reduction¹⁸.

With its unique ability to create partnerships and promote capacity-building, the United Nations Development Programme currently works mainly with member states of the United Nations to “strengthen national and subnational policy, legal and institutional systems; foster greater coherence of disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation efforts; provide access to risk information and early warning systems; and strengthen preparedness and response measures¹⁹”. currently prioritizes its four areas of disaster risk reduction in developing countries as:

¹⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/disasterriskreduction>

¹⁸ <https://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

¹⁹ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/climate-and-disaster-resilience/disaster-risk-reduction.html>

Actionable Risk Information

UNDP argues that making risk information accessible is key to creating risk-informed development plans and promotes the capacity building of national and regional stakeholders in conducting comprehensive risk assessments as well as the institutionalization and standardization of tools and methodologies.

Disaster and Climate Risk Governance

UNDP recommends strengthening disaster governance at local and national levels by building capacity for coherent implementation policies, incentives for DRR through legal framework, adapting for risk in national planning, and ensuring gender-responsive DRR.

Preparedness and Early Warning

UNDP advocates for “strengthening effective coordination for effective dissemination of early warning and preparedness messages; expansion of infrastructure and technical capacities of forecasting institutions; building contingency planning capacities at national and local levels”²⁰

Urban and Community Risk Management

UNDP recommends improving investment in risk-informed communities, technical assistance in implementation of risk reduction programs, and support of local and municipal governments in expanding community risk management.

Questions to Consider

²⁰ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/climate-and-disaster-resilience/disaster-risk-reduction/>

1. How can the United Nations Development Programme provide targeted policy recommendations while aligning with the global Sendai framework?
2. What priorities for disaster risk reduction should take precedence in developing countries?
3. How does the United Nations promote investment in risk reduction policies in economically disadvantaged countries?