

BACKGROUND GUIDE— Seniors Intermediate



GIISMUN
TOKYO 2025
CHAPTER 5

Committee:

ECOSOC

Economic and Social Council

Agenda:

Addressing the economic challenges of digital inequality in developing countries, focusing on policies to expand access to affordable technology, enhance digital literacy, and foster innovation for sustainable development.

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Committee Overview

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a central UN body focused on global economic and social issues, coordinating development work across the UN system. Comprising 54 elected Member States, it operates without veto powers, fostering collaboration. ECOSOC guides policy on sustainable development, relying on studies and expert input, and engaging extensively with non-governmental organizations. Fifty-four member countries take turns on this council, and everyone gets an equal say—no single country has a veto, which really encourages everyone to collaborate and find common ground.

History of the committee

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is an advocacy-driven discussion about closing the digital divide between the developing nations. With the economy becoming global, billions of individuals are still offline, deprived of education, healthcare, and employment due to inadequate infrastructure, limited levels of digital literacy, and prohibitively costly technology. This committee will focus on actionable policies to enable equal access to digital technologies, promote innovation ecosystems, and empower marginalized groups through inclusive digital development.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the first and most important committees since it attempts to advance global monetary, social collaboration and improvement. Its origin is profoundly entwined with the development of the UN in the repercussions of the Second Great War, denoting a critical shift towards a worldwide joint effort to forestall future contentions and improve worldwide success.

ECOSOC is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It was created to promote international economic and social cooperation and development. Its formation followed World War II, reflecting a global commitment to peace and prosperity through collaboration.

A few of important moments that define in ECOSOC's historical timeline include:

- **Formal Designation:**

ECOSOC was officially established on June 26, 1945, with the signing of the UN Charter. It is one of the original six organs: General Assembly, Security Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice, Secretariat, and ECOSOC.

- **Responsibilities:**

ECOSOC coordinates economic, social, and related work of the 15 UN specialized agencies and oversees the work of functional commissions and regional commissions.

- **Membership Expansion:**

ECOSOC initially had 18 members, however, it expanded in 1965 and 1974 to reflect the growing UN membership. It now has 54 members, elected based on geographical representation.

- **Impact of Expansion:**

The establishment and expansion of ECOSOC increased diversity of perspectives on global economic and social issues and improved representation and participation of member states.

Background Information

The Economic and Social Council is at the heart of the United Nations system to advance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

ECOSOC links a diverse family of subsidiary bodies and UN entities (Organigram) dedicated to sustainable development, providing overall guidance and coordination. These include regional economic and social commissions, functional commissions facilitating intergovernmental discussions of major global issues, expert bodies establishing important global normative frameworks, and specialized agencies, programs, and funds at work around the world to translate development commitments into real changes in people's lives.

Sustainable development is the international community's most urgent priority and the core aim of the 2030 Development Agenda for sustainable development. ECOSOC operates at the center of the UN system's work on all three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social, and environmental. It is the unifying platform for integration, action on sustainable development, and follow-up and review.

Building on its coordination role within the UN system, ECOSOC offers a unique global meeting point for productive dialogues among policymakers, parliamentarians, academics, foundations, businesses, youth and 3,200+ registered non-governmental organizations.

Each year, ECOSOC structures its work around an annual theme of global importance to sustainable development. This ensures focused attention, among ECOSOC's array of partners, and throughout the UN development system.

By emphasizing combined economic, social and environmental concerns, ECOSOC encourages agreement on coherent policies and actions that make fundamental links across all three.

Key Definitions

- **Automation:** Automation is the process of using technology, such robots and artificial intelligence (AI), to do tasks or activities that were previously performed by humans with little to no help from other people. In the context of the labor market, automation could make some professions obsolete, but it might also create new employment opportunities in emerging industries.
- **Artificial intelligence (AI):** The development of computer systems with artificial intelligence allows them to do tasks like learning, reasoning, problem solving, and decision making that would typically need human cognition. Natural language processing and machine learning are two examples of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies that have the potential to significantly change the labor market by boosting human abilities, automating tasks, and creating new employment opportunities.

- **Job market:** The supply and demand for labor in an economy is referred to as the job market, or labor market. It takes into consideration factors like job opportunities, remuneration, skill requirements, and workforce dynamics and encompasses the labor services that are transferred between employers and workers. Workforce composition, skill requirements, and the nature of employment itself is all being altered by automation and artificial intelligence.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Entrepreneurship is the process of starting, managing, and growing a business venture with the intention of creating value or bringing new products or services to the market. To prepare for the impact of automation and artificial intelligence on the labor market, entrepreneurship is essential for creating new opportunities for economic development, innovation, and job creation.

Agenda Overview

The agenda and the committee's aim/targets

Agenda: Preparing for the impact of automation and AI on the job market, and creating new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship.

As the world continues to advance technologically, the integration of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) into various sectors has become increasingly prevalent. While these advancements hold the promise of increased efficiency, productivity, and innovation, they also pose significant challenges to the global job market. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recognizes the urgent need to address the potential disruptions caused by automation and AI and to explore strategies for creating new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship in this rapidly evolving landscape.

The widespread adoption of automation and AI has led to concerns about the displacement of human workers. Certain jobs are at risk of becoming obsolete as machines and algorithms are increasingly capable of performing tasks traditionally carried out by humans. This displacement has the potential to exacerbate unemployment and income inequality, particularly for low-skilled workers.

While automation and AI present challenges to the job market, they also create new opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship. Roles that require creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills are less susceptible to automation. Moreover, the development and maintenance of AI systems themselves create demand for skilled professionals in fields such as data science, machine learning, and software engineering.

It is imperative for policymakers to develop strategies to mitigate the negative consequences of job displacement. This may involve reskilling and upskilling programs to equip workers with the necessary skills for the jobs of the future. By fostering innovation, promoting lifelong learning, and supporting entrepreneurship, ECOSOC can help create a future where automation and AI contribute to shared prosperity and sustainable development for all.

Discussion Points

- **Post-COVID Economic Growth:** Debate strategies for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on youth unemployment, income inequality, and equitable digital access.
- **Financing for Development:** Discuss funding mechanisms to support economic development in low-income and developing nations, with emphasis on infrastructure development and making global recovery more inclusive.
- **Social Development Goals:** Explore solutions to improve access to healthcare and education, promote gender equality in economic opportunities, and align efforts with SDGs 1 (No Poverty) and 2 (Zero Hunger).
- **Climate and Sustainability:** Address challenges in climate finance, especially for vulnerable countries, and examine solutions for water security, sustainable agriculture, and building smart, green urban areas.
- **Global Cooperation and Aid Transparency:** Consider ways to enhance transparency and accountability in international aid, support post-conflict economic reconstruction, and strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation.

- **Technology and Development:** Evaluate the role of artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, and technology innovation in promoting sustainable development and reducing the global digital divide.

Issues faced by the committee

Limited Resources:

Limited resources is one of the major problems ECOSOC faces as the issue demands substantial amounts of financial and human resources. This limitation can be an obstacle in devising and executing their plans. Investments are needed in various areas such as research and educational programs on the issue. ECOSOC would need to plan their resource allocations and work around this handicap by optimizing and implementing strategies that would give the maximum outcome with the resources available.

Global Cooperation:

A key issue faced by ECOSOC is getting everyone on board on their views on the problems and the strategies that would need to be implemented for the same. Global Cooperation is crucial as not all countries see this issue as equally important, and their economic development levels and policy priorities vary, making it hard to work together. Some nations might be more focused on other problems, while others may not have the resources to address AI's impact on jobs. These differences can make it challenging to agree on shared actions or strategies to tackle the job market changes caused by automation and AI.

Impact of AI:

AI is currently an innovative force that is able to change traditional practices across a number of economic industries. The broad implementation of this technology has expedited progress across several sectors, including manufacturing, banking, healthcare, and retail. The primary advantage of artificial intelligence is its ability to accomplish tasks quicker, more reliably, correctly, and consistently than humans—often surpassing them in the process. Artificial Intelligence offers cost-effective solutions by reallocating resources from labor-intensive tasks to more valuable ventures. Due to AI's effectiveness in problem-solving and decision-making, which helps organizations become more competitive, efficient, and nimble, a wide range of sectors have also adopted it. This makes it hard for ECOSOC to resolve the issue as it would possibly lead to a setback in the development in the working area.

Regulations:

Every state government has a set of rules and regulations for employees and workplaces. With the development of AI, there are many rules and regulations that are outdated and cannot be implemented by these devices. This allows companies and agencies to use these loopholes to their advantage and this can lead to local unemployment. Another problem is that putting in new rules and regulations will require the cooperation of others so getting everyone on board will be a difficult task.

UN Response (Actions taken)

ECOSOC has proposed comprehensive solutions to meet the challenges posed by AI. First, it is recommended that employment laws and regulations be modernized to better align with the evolving nature of work in the digital age. It involves changing existing structures to accommodate new forms of employment resulting from technological advances, such as gig work and freelancing, and ensures support for workers' rights and protections. Reforming employment laws ECOSOC aims to create new jobs and changes in the labor market. To establish law making.

The committee underscores the significance of putting resources into schooling, preparing and long-lasting learning projects to furnish people with the information and abilities expected to flourish in an innovation driven economy. This incorporates extending quality instruction and professional preparation program access, especially focusing on underserved networks and minimizing gatherings. ECOSOC aims to provide individuals with the knowledge and skills they need to adapt to shifting business requirements, move between industries, and take advantage of AI-created new business opportunities.

The committee recommends policies aimed at reducing income inequality and addressing the root causes of wealth and opportunity gaps. This could incorporate a dynamic duty framework, the advancement of fair wages and work principles, and the reinforcing of government managed retirement frameworks to guarantee that the advantages of monetary development are impartially conveyed among the populace.

ECOSOC also suggests approaches to assist affected workers and communities in order to lessen the impact of displacement caused by automation and artificial intelligence. This includes providing unemployment benefits, job placement and employment counseling to help displaced workers transition into new employment opportunities or become entrepreneurs in addition, ECOSOC supports businesses aimed at boosting productivity and supporting the growth of innovative growth industries. Through work improvement, ECOSOC expects to animate monetary development and give business open doors to people impacted by modern interruption.

Scope of Debate

Possible Caucus Questions:

- What strategies can member states implement to reskill and upskill their workforce to adapt to the changing demands of automation and AI?
- How can international cooperation be strengthened to foster innovation and entrepreneurship in sectors that are likely to experience job displacement due to automation?
- What measures can be taken to ensure that marginalized and vulnerable populations are not left behind in the transition to an AI-driven job market?
- What role should educational institutions play in preparing students for the future job market heavily influenced by automation and AI?
- How can policymakers balance the need for automation and AI advancements with the preservation of existing jobs and industries?
- What policies can be implemented to address potential ethical concerns and ensure that AI technologies are deployed responsibly in the workplace?
- How can governments support the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in emerging industries driven by automation and AI?
- What mechanisms can be put in place to mitigate the potential negative effects of job displacement, such as income inequality and unemployment?

- How can member states collaborate with the private sector to create a conducive environment for the development and adoption of AI technologies while safeguarding workers' rights?
- What steps can be taken to address the digital divide and ensure that all segments. Does society have equal access to opportunities in the digital economy?

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