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Preparation Paper/Study Guide:

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

“Sustainable Energy for All”

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Structure of Committee

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the principle organ of the United Nations (UN) coordinating all economic and social matters concerning the work of the supranational body. Its primary responsibility is to work for the development of economic, social, educational and cultural progress of the world.

ECOSOC was established in 1946 under the UN Charter as one of the founding bodies of the UN. The Charter was amended in 1965 and again in 1974 to expand the membership of ECOSOC from 18 to 27 and then to 54 member states, respectively. This reflected the exponentially growing membership of the UN in the wake of the decolonisation process.

The UN General Assembly elects the Council's 54 member states for three-year terms, with the chance of immediate re-election, on the basis of their geographical representation – 14 seats are allocated to African States, 11 seats to Asian states, 6 seats to Eastern European states, 10 seats to Latin American and Caribbean states, and 13 seats to Western European and other states. Furthermore, the Bureau of ECOSOC is elected by these member states at the beginning of each annual session. It is responsible for the organisation of each session of ECOSOC and for the agenda and program of work at these meetings. H.E. Ambassador Martin Sajdik of Austria currently holds this position until the end of 2014 and is supported by four Vice-Presidents from Croatia, El Salvador, Libya and the Republic of Korea.

As the principle organ of the UN coordinating all economic and social matters, ECOSOC is not only mandated to serve as a platform for discussion on economic, social, cultural, educational and health topics, but it also assists other UN entities in shaping their programs in these issue areas. According to Art. 63 of the UN Charter, ECOSOC can enter into agreements with 14 autonomous organisations, so-called 'specialised agencies', and coordinate their activities. That by ECOSOC brings various autonomous organisations into 'relationship with the UN', which implies that they are able to work with the UN and with each other through the machinery of ECOSOC. These agencies include, inter alia, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNHCR, WB and WHO.

Apart from specialised agencies, there are a number of subsidiary bodies under the ECOSOC umbrella, which help to achieve the goals of the Council. These subsidiary bodies incorporate five regional and ten functional commissions, including the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was replaced by a high-level political forum for sustainable development through the Rio+20 Conference Outcome Document. ECOSOC provides policy coherence and coordinates the overlapping functions of all these subsidiary bodies; therefore, the Council has broad responsibility for approximately 70% of the human and financial resources of the entire UN system.

In addition to coordinating various bodies, ECOSOC, established to assist the UN General Assembly in promoting international economic and social cooperation and development, is also responsible for information gathering, advising member states and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the entire UN system. It is important to note that these policy recommendations, in contrast to resolutions passed by the UN Security Council, are **non-binding**. Nevertheless, recommendations of ECOSOC still carry moral and political weight since they are used to establish political commitments.

Moreover, civil society plays an active role in ECOSOC, since it represents the main entry point into the UN system for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and remains the only body with an institutional framework for NGO participation. Art. 71 of the UN Charter empowers ECOSOC to cooperate with NGOs for consultation and to further socio-economic progress of countries across the world. Thus, the Council constitutes the main link to NGOs in the United Nations system, with almost 4,000 NGOs enjoying consultative status with ECOSOC.

Topic

Nowadays it is impossible to imagine a functioning economy without electricity and other modern energy services. From the creation of job opportunities to economic development, from security concerns to education, energy lies at the heart of all countries' core interests. In particular, access to energy is indispensable for human development, as electricity is an essential requirement for several basic activities such as lighting, refrigeration and the running of household appliances.

However, energy is not yet a universal good. According to a survey conducted by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in October 2011, more than 1.3 billion people lack access to electricity. This represents one out of every five people on Earth. Out of these 1.3 billion more than 95% are either in sub-Saharan Africa or developing South Asia. Over twice as many – approximately 3 billion people – rely on traditional biomass – wood, coal, charcoal or animal waste – for cooking their meals and heating their homes. Even when access to energy is provided, millions of poor people are unable to afford these energy services.

Notwithstanding the importance of access to energy, in the debates during the late 1990s leading up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), energy, particularly access to energy, was not a prominent feature. Therefore in 2000, with the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which the international community committed to the eight MDGs to be reached by 2015, energy was neither included as a goal nor as a subsequent target.

Yet, in 2010, when reaching the targets of several MDGs was, and until today is still a distant prospect, world leaders started to realise that without access to energy millions of people are denied the opportunity to improve their lives. It became evident that access to energy is crucial to achieving the development goals. It does not only raise living standards, but access to energy also enables many basic activities such as income generation or the provision of power to community health clinics and refrigerators to store medicines. United Nations General-Secretary Ban Ki-moon highlighted this importance of access to energy by describing energy poverty as an obstacle to human development and stating that,

“Universal energy access is a key priority on the global development agenda. It is a foundation for all MDGs.” (Ban Ki-moon, 2010)

However, issues concerning energy and electricity are not only reserved for the poor. Even developed countries with sufficient modern energy services face enormous challenges. Heavy dependency on fossil fuels, including coal, natural gas and oil, which according to the World Bank amount to over 75% of the total world's energy consumption, contribute to changes in the Earth's climate through the emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Scientists are alarmed that if the world continues in the current manner, global temperatures could rise by more than four degrees Celsius until the end of this century. This would have devastating effects on everything from the world economy, to the health of our citizens and the health of the ecosystems that sustain life on Earth, from energy-, food- and water-security to international security.

Therefore, an energy transition – from fossil fuels to renewable energy – is needed to help benefit people all around the world, and the inextricable link between energy and sustainable development can no longer be denied.

The Green Economy Report (2011) developed by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in cooperation with international economists and experts indicates that green economies are a new engine of growth and can produce higher growth in GDP and GDP per capita than a business-as-usual scenario within five to ten years. Therefore, affordable, cleaner and more efficient energy is not only important to reducing greenhouse emissions, but it is also relevant in the eradication of poverty. This is, above all, supported by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who pointed out that, protecting our planet, lifting people out of poverty or advancing economic growth will not be possible without energy – sustainable energy for all.

Sustainable Energy refers to energy sources that will allow the Earth to sustain balanced, healthy ecosystems and human life. By definition, a sustainable provision of energy allows to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Ban Ki-Moon listed sustainable development, including sustainable energy, as one of his five priorities to guide him through his second five-year term as UN Secretary-General. To reach this end, Ban Ki-moon established, already in June 2009, the Secretary-General's **Advisory Group on Energy and Climate Change (AGECC)**, a multi-stakeholder partnership comprising representatives of the UN system, including the World Bank, of the private sector and of research institutions. The AGECC was chaired by

Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), and mandated to provide recommendations concerning energy issues in the context of climate change and sustainable development.

The Advisory Group published its final report on 28 April 2010, in which it called for international action facilitating universal access to modern energy services and improved energy efficiency. This report outlined two complementary goals – to ensure universal access to modern energy services and to reduce global energy intensity by 40%, both to be achieved by 2030. The AGECC concluded that to reach these goals all countries have an equal role to play, and that developed as well as developing countries need to build and enhance their capacity to implement effective policies and regulations with regard to energy use. The recommended actions further included the launch of a global campaign in support of “Energy for Sustainable Development”.

The recommendations of the AGECC, most notably the idea to set in motion a global campaign, formed the basis of the “**Sustainable Energy for All**” (SE4ALL) initiative. Under the leadership of Ban Ki-moon, the initiative, based on a voluntary sign-up process, was launched in September 2011 to mobilise urgent action concerning sustainable energy. Its ultimate goal is to make sustainable energy for everyone a reality by 2030. To realise this goal, SE4ALL is focused on achieving three interlinked objectives by 2030:

1. *Providing universal access to modern energy services*
2. *Doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency*
3. *Doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix*

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These three targets are aimed at driving actions and mobilising commitments to positively transform the world's energy services. In general, SE4ALL was designed for the purpose of creating platforms for cooperation, exchange, innovation and project development in the energy sector, bringing together key stakeholders from governments, businesses and civil society. The initiative contains eleven ‘Action Areas’, which address power generation, principle sectors of energy consumption and existing obstacles, and provides a framework for identifying High Impact Opportunities (HIO) that will catalyse change and prompt innovation. HIO are categories of action that have been identified as having significant potential to advance the three targets of the SE4ALL initiative and serve as a platform for stakeholders to work together on specific actions that advance sustainable energy. Using this framework, countries and stakeholders can create their own pathways toward SE4ALL.



The initiative coincided with the designation of 2014-2024 as the **United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All** by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2012. Thereby, the UNGA underscored the significance of energy issues for sustainable development and reaffirmed the importance to make SE4ALL a reality. This declaration built on a growing interest of Member States in renewable energy issues and indicates that the topic is no longer dismissed on the international agenda. Up until now, a significant momentum continues to build around the SE4ALL initiative, with more than 50 developing countries having joined the partnership and more than US\$ 50 billion being mobilised from the private sector and investors.

Due to the growing interest of the international community for sustainable energy, Ban Ki-moon lobbied for SE4ALL to be put at the centre of the agenda of the **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development** (hereinafter referred to as Rio+20). Rio+20 was held between 20 – 22 June 2012 in Rio de

Janeiro, Brazil, and attended by over 40,000 people, amongst others world leaders, along with participants from the private sector, NGOs and other groups. The Conference was the biggest sustainable development event on the global agenda following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The key themes of the conference centred on the two questions of 'how to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development and lift people out of poverty', and 'how to improve international coordination for sustainable development'. Therefore, it presented an optimal momentum to draw the world's attention to the problem of energy poverty.

Although Rio+20 renewed the political commitment of UN Member States to sustainable development and witnessed the formation of new partnerships to advance sustainable development, the Outcome Document, entitled "The Future We Want", is very vague. Specifically concerning energy services, a widely discussed topic at the conference, the Outcome Document neither provides for an action plan to achieve 'green growth' nor does it include specific targets on facilitating access to energy services for those 1.3 billion people who currently do not have any.

Therefore, SE4ALL did not receive strong endorsement in "The Future We Want", as Ban Ki-Moon had hoped for. Merely Paragraph 129 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document noted the SE4ALL initiative, but it did not include the three specific objectives and target date. Such strong endorsement in the Outcome Document would have helped the voluntary initiative to receive high-level UN commitment, thus Member States would have faced more political pressure to join the initiative and make further commitments.

However, the Outcome Document included an agreement by Member States to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to follow-up on the MDGs – as their target date of 2015 is approaching – and converge with the post-2015 development agenda. The Rio+20 Conference did not elaborate on specific goals, but noted that these should be limited in number, aspirational and easy to communicate.

Instead, on 22 January 2013, the UNGA tasked an **Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG)** with preparing a proposal on the SDGs. This OWG comprises 70 countries that share 30 seats and held eight regular sessions from March 2013 until February 2014 to discuss several topics of importance that need to be included in the SDGs, so-called Focus Areas, and prepared possible goals. From March 2014 onwards the OWG started to focus on discussing a draft report including goals and targets, and are expected to submit a report by September 2014, which will contain SDGs to be considered at the 68th Session of the UNGA.

At the OWG's Fifth Session from 25 to 27 November 2013 a proposal, supported by the majority of countries, was put forward for a dedicated goal on "Securing sustainable energy for all" with a number of associated targets including the three from the SE4ALL initiative. This underscored the feasibility of achieving the targets of SE4ALL by 2030 and highlights the broad agreement of the international community that energy acts as an enabler for sustainable development and is critical to poverty eradication. Therefore, in contrast to the discussions leading to the MDGs, it was agreed that energy must be clearly integrated into the SDGs.

The SE4ALL initiative and the discussions of the OWG to include energy in the SDGs clearly indicates that the international community understands the pressing importance of sustainable energy. However, until now, the commitment to achieve sustainable energy for all is only on a voluntary basis. It needs strong endorsement for high-level UN commitment to become a reality. In that world leaders recognised the key role of ECOSOC to endorse such commitment and to address the building blocks of sustainable development.

Bloc Positions

Bloc positions vary mostly in the extent to which they endorse sustainable energy beyond rhetoric. While in some countries a considerable shift towards renewable energy is taking place, in others change towards sustainability in energy production remains a mere promise. This becomes most evident when considering the development of the major players' energy mix and the amounts they invest into renewable energy. Countries also vary in the extent to which they actively assist developing countries in providing better energy access.

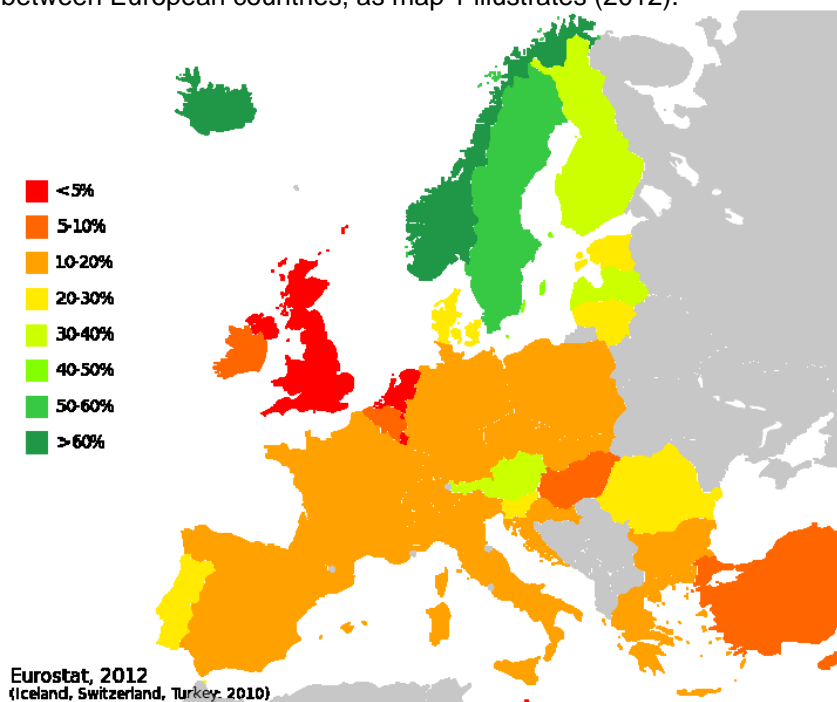
The **People's Republic of China** is taking considerable steps to shift to a low-carbon growth and has committed itself to producing 16% of its primary energy from renewable sources by 2020. The country's efforts to eradicate poverty, expand economic development and solve its air pollution problems have driven the country to invest heavily in clean energy. Therefore, investments in renewable energy has risen steadily

over the last decade, and with US\$ 54 billion in investments in renewable energy sources in 2013 alone, the People's Republic of China is now the world leader in clean energy investments. Already in 2005, the Government passed renewable energy laws that offer a variety of financial incentives, such as national funds to foster renewable energy development, discounted lending and tax preferences for renewable energy projects. This combination of investments and policy incentives has encouraged major advances in the development of both wind power and solar power and provides an example of policy-led growth in renewable energy that has created jobs, income and revenue streams for low carbon industries.

The biggest renewable sector employer worldwide is the solar panel industry, which employed 2.27 million people, according to Irena, a body comprising 168 member nations (Biofuels, with 1.45 million, and wind power, with 0.83 million being next biggest employers). With 2.6 million jobs, China is the largest employer in the renewable sector. Two-thirds of these jobs are in the solar energy sector, in which employment has trebled in two years.

Like China, the **European Union** is also making a considerable effort towards more renewable energy. The Maastricht Treaty set an objective of promoting stable growth while protecting the environment. The Amsterdam Treaty added the principle of sustainable development to the objectives of the EU. Since 1997, the EU has been working towards a renewable energy supply equivalent to 12% of the total EU's energy consumption by 2010. In the European Conference for Renewable Energy in Berlin in 2004, the EU defined ambitious goals of its own. The conclusion was that by 2020, the EU would seek to obtain 20% of its total energy consumption requirements with renewable energy sources. Up until that point, the EU had only set targets up to 2010, and this proposal was the first to represent the EU's commitment up to 2020. Currently, renewables account for about 14% of the energy production in the EU.

While general tendencies in the EU exist, the actual use of sources of renewable energy varies considerably between European countries, as map 1 illustrates (2012).



Map1

In several issues, the EU furthermore cannot be said to hold a “bloc position”, as economic and strategic interests between individual countries vary. Thus, general tendencies in the EU regarding renewables do exist, but delegates will have to play close attention to the national interest of each member state.

One issue in which different positions of EU member states were evident is the use of fuels made of food crops. In December 2013, Energy ministers from the 28 EU member states failed to agree on a compromise deal to limit the use of transport fuels made from food crops. Previously, a 5-7% cap on biofuels produced from food has been discussed. In June 2014 EU energy ministers agreed to limit production of biofuels made from food crops. The proposed 7% limit is part of a goal to get 10% of transport fuel from renewable sources

by 2020. Currently approximately 5% of EU transport fuel comes from renewable sources (For more information on the issue of food produced biofuels, see section “Issues to be addressed in the Resolution”).

One general tendency is the rising acceptance of wind energy. In 2011 installed wind power capacity totalled 93,957 megawatts (MW) - enough to supply 6.3% of the EU's electricity. 9,616 MW of wind power was installed in 2011 alone, representing 21.4% of new power capacity. The EU wind industry has had an average annual growth of 15.6% over the last 17 years (1995-2011).

Solar power is also gaining significance. In 2002, the EU produced 50% of photovoltaic modules in the world, with Germany in a leading role (79% of EU production in 2004). Europe still accounts for the predominant share of the global PV market, with 55% of all new capacity in 2012.

Those countries producing a considerable share of either wind or solar technology on the global market (for instance Germany or Denmark) have a vital interest in promoting these. Delegates are encouraged to take a close look at the energy mix and the production of energy related technology (not only renewables, but also nuclear technology etc.) of their respective country instead of simply endorsing positions held by EU institutions.

In 2012 the **United States** produced 13.2 % of their electricity through sources of renewable energy. Renewable energy reached a significant milestone in the first quarter of 2011, when it surpassed energy production from nuclear power. About half of the total renewable power in the US is generated by hydroelectric power plants.

Even though the United States are currently not far behind the EU in terms of their production of renewable energy, the future plans of the United States look considerably different. While the EU seeks to have 20% of its total energy consumption provided by renewable sources, the US seek to preserve the status quo. US Energy Information Administration projects renewable sources to supply only 16% of US electricity by 2040 (see figure 1).

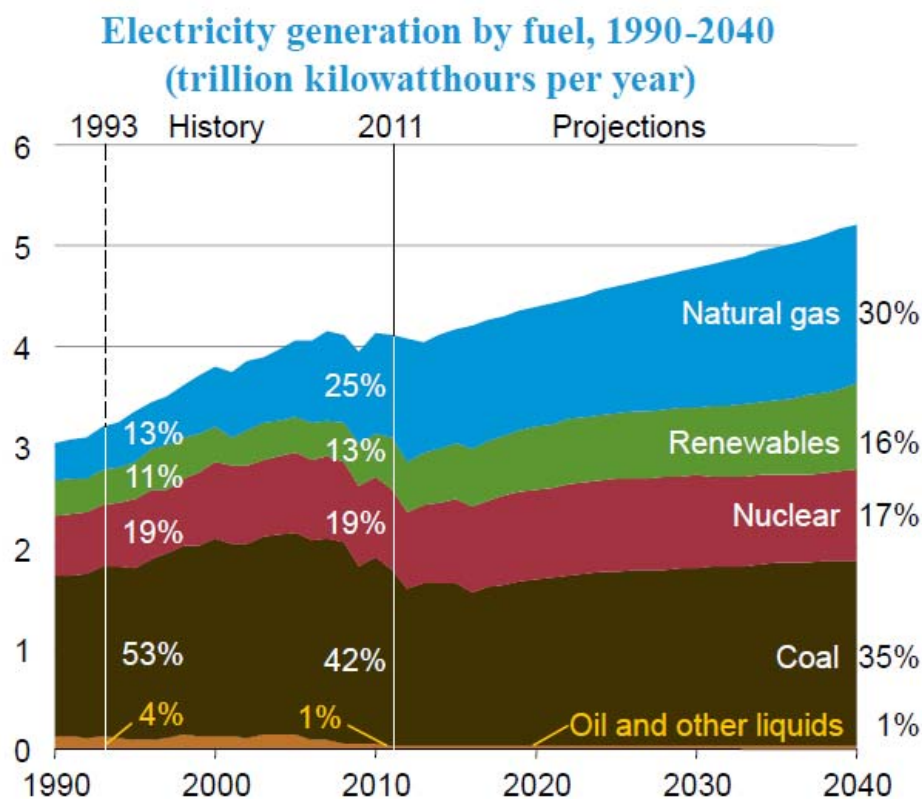


Figure2

While there is a slight increase in renewables in figure 2, more obvious is the shift towards electricity generated by natural gas. This is due to the fact that the invention of hydraulic fracturing (“*fracking*”) has made it readily available to the US. In 2000 shale gas provided only 1% of U.S. natural gas production; by

2010 it was over 20% and the U.S. government's Energy Information Administration predicts that by 2035, 46% of the United States' natural gas supply will come from shale gas.

This shift to natural gas has also significant implications on US economic interests. Since about 2006, US imports of crude oil and petroleum products have been declining, while crude oil and petroleum exports have trebled since 2005, which points towards a considerably reduced foreign dependency of the US on crude oil. Export rates for natural gas itself on the other hand are skyrocketing, having reached the tenfold value of 2004 in 2013. This is a fact that has and will in the future have a significant impact on US foreign policy.

Renewable energy in **Russia** mainly consists of hydroelectric energy 16% of Russia's electricity is generated from hydropower, and less than 1% is generated from all other renewable energy sources combined. This makes Russia the fifth largest producer of renewable energy in the world, although it is 56th when hydroelectric energy is not taken into account.

While most of the large hydropower plants in Russia date from the Soviet era, the abundance of fossil fuels in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation has resulted in little need for the development of other renewable energy sources. Officially, there are currently plans to develop all types of renewable energy, which is strongly encouraged by the Russian government.

Important to keep in mind regarding Russia is its statist policy in the energy sector. The government controls all major sources of oil and natural gas, which in the past has often made the dependency of European and CIS states on Russian resources a political advantage for Russia. It is thus very much in the interest of Europe to reduce its dependency, which in turn would be a strategic disadvantage for Russia. Even though Russia exports mainly to European and CIS countries, the recent weeks have brought signs of a reorientation towards China as an energy trade partner. The two countries have signed a 30-year, \$400bn (£237bn) deal for Gazprom to deliver Russian gas to China. This strategic move might also be interpreted as an attempt of Russia to reduce its dependency on Europe as an export market.

Most **developing countries** have abundant renewable energy resources, including solar energy, wind power, geothermal energy, and biomass, as well as the ability to manufacture the relatively labor-intensive systems that harness these. By developing such energy sources developing countries can reduce their dependence on oil and natural gas, creating energy portfolios that are less vulnerable to price rises. In many circumstances, these investments can be less expensive than fossil fuel energy systems. It is therefore in the interest of many developing countries to speed up research on renewable energy and make it cheaper.

This is also the reason why many renewable markets are growing at rapid rates in countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Egypt, Indonesia, Kenya, Tanzania, Thailand, Tunisia, and Uruguay. Two countries are particularly outstanding: Costa Rica has become the world leader in renewable use with massive investment in windmill technologies. 99.2% of the total primary energy supply is of renewable. The government's aim is to make the country the world's first carbon neutral country. Kenya is the world leader in the number of solar power systems installed per capita. More than 30,000 small solar panels, each producing 12 to 30 watts, are sold in Kenya annually. Kenya was furthermore the first African country to use geothermal power and still has the largest installed capacity of geothermal power in Africa.

While no bloc or country will endorse a position that is in sharp contrast with its own interest, it is still important to notice that **ECOSOC resolutions are not binding and their primary purpose is building commitment**. Unlike in the Security Council (where power play gets very obvious sometimes) delegates will have to find a **balance between advocating what is in the interest of their country and showing social responsibility** in their rhetoric.

Issues to be addressed in the Resolution

In large parts, the resolution of this council shall deal with the two key questions raised by the Rio 20+ conference: "How to build a green economy to achieve sustainable development", and "How to improve international coordination for sustainable development". As Rio 20+ led to almost no conclusions regarding sustainable energy production, it will be the task of this council to build agreements.

A major part of discussion on this council will be on what technologies to promote and how to do so. Figure 3 shows the share of various kinds of renewable energy. Discuss how this energy mix should be altered in the future. Technical knowledge on specific sources of renewable energy will be helpful (especially their

advantages and disadvantages), however, knowing the position of each country and of the major players will turn out to be more significant, as ECOSOC resolutions are rather vague and give only a general direction.

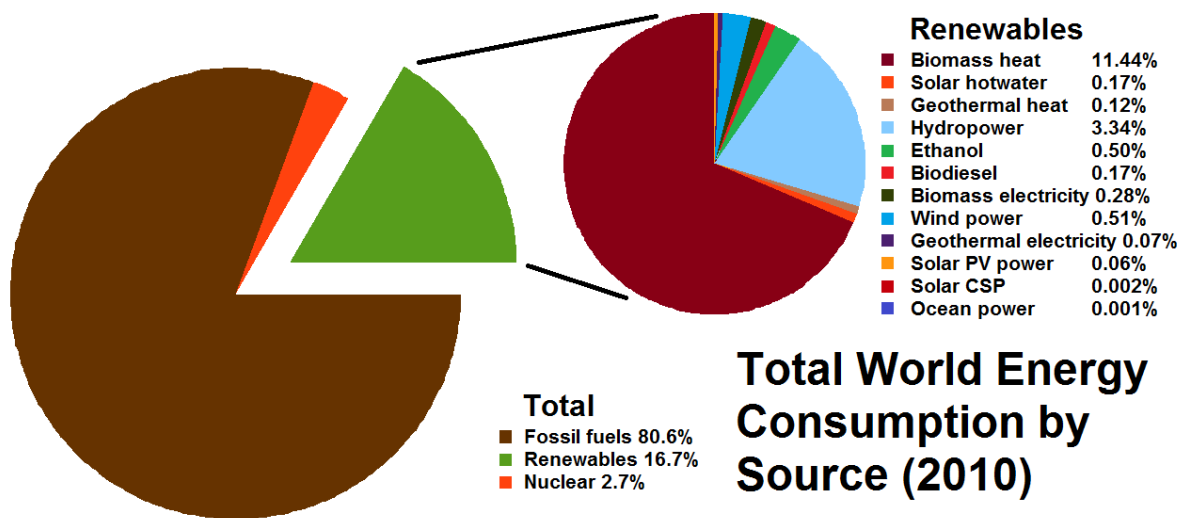


Figure3

Energy production has considerable social implications. While many renewable energy projects are large-scale, renewable technologies are also suited to rural and remote areas and developing countries, where energy is often crucial in human development. United Nations' Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said that renewable energy has the ability to lift the poorest nations to new levels of prosperity. This refers back to the SE4ALL initiative. The resolution should include a statement towards the three targets of the initiative and may (if these are endorsed by ECOSOC) give general directions on how they should be achieved.

Natural gas is often described as the cleanest fossil fuel. It produces about 29% and 44% less carbon dioxide per joule delivered than oil and coal respectively and potentially fewer pollutants than other hydrocarbon fuels. The IEA estimates that natural gas will supply about 50% of the global energy consumption by 2080. Natural gas is, however, not a renewable source of energy and it has some major disadvantages: First, natural gas is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide due to the greater global-warming potential of methane. Second, the extraction, storage, transportation and distribution of natural gas are known to leak into the atmosphere. A study in 2011 demonstrated that the leak rate of methane was high enough to jeopardize its global warming advantage over coal. Delegates should discuss, how the development projected by the IEA could be avoided through renewable energy (while keeping in mind that several countries have a considerable interest in a greater share of natural gas in the global energy production).

Advocates for biofuels say they produce less greenhouse gases (GHGs) than fossil fuels. But environmental campaigners and many EU parliamentarians have raised concerns about the additional carbon contribution of indirect land use change (iLuc) caused by biofuels that come from food crops, known as "first-generation biofuels". This would mean that food crops in fact contribute more greenhouse gases than the fossil fuels they are designed to replace. Biofuels are also criticized for causing deforestation and hunger as farmland or crops that could be used for food supply are diverted to biofuels production. Delegates should discuss the ecological and social viability of biofuels while also taking the economic and political impact of biofuels in their countries into account.

In the past few years, very futuristic ideas and concepts have entered the field of renewable energy. Artificial photosynthesis uses techniques including nanotechnology to store solar electromagnetic energy in chemical bonds by splitting water to produce hydrogen and then using carbon dioxide to make methanol. Other concepts, such as space-based solar power have been in research for several decades already. Delegates may discuss such concepts on the council, however, only while keeping in mind that they are required to represent the political position or interest of their country(which must be in consonance with their advocacy of any specific futuristic technology) and that negotiations on ECOSOC are not supposed to get caught up in technical specifications.

Further Reading

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/>

<http://www.se4all.org>

<http://www.iied.org/sustainable-energy-can-new-initiative-succeed-where-rio20-failed>

<http://www.iea.org/topics/>

<http://www.worldenergy.org/data/sustainability-index/>

<http://world-electricity-generation.findthedata.org/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/may/09/ipcc-renewable-energy-power-world>

http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Services/Energy_and_Climate_Change/Renewable_Energy/Publications/Scaling%20Up%20web.pdf

http://www.uncsd2012.org/content/documents/774futurewewant_english.pdf

<http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climatechange/shared/Documents/AGECC%20summary%20report%5B1%5D.pdf>

Conference information

All preparation materials and the Rules of Procedure are available on the homepage¹ ("Committees-Topic-Team" section). Each participant has to prepare individually for the country they are representing (libraries, internet, embassies, media) and send in a one page Position Paper to the Chairs prior to the conference, since the Study Guide is only a general outline.

Position papers

A Position Paper² is a brief outline of a country's policy and interests concerning the topic at hand. It should contain a clear statement of the country's position on the topic and the reason behind it, and it should suggest a plan of action concerning the problem under consideration. The Position Paper should be a product of the delegate's own research and should be written concise and up to the point. Ideally, a Position Paper is 1 to 2 pages (A4). The font type should be Arial, with a font size of 11 pt., single line spacing.

Note that the below mentioned structure is only one way of writing Position Papers and is meant to guide the delegate's of VIMUN in their writing process. At the beginning of your Position Paper you should state the following: Committee, Country, Issue.

In the first part of your Position Paper you should briefly specify the issue of your Committee:

- Why is this issue relevant? What is the scope of the problem? You can name statistics, the major players or the current developments concerning the issue under discussion.
- You can also mention the UN action that has been taken in this respect already. Which resolutions have been passed so far? Which conferences have been held? What is planned for the future?

In the second and most important part you should specify the official position of the country/organisation you represent in respect to the issue under consideration:

- What is your country's/organisation's policy on the topic? Why? What issues in this area are particularly relevant to the country / organisation you represent? What action has your country / organisation taken already?
- What are the possible solutions to the problems in this area? What is the type of resolution your country / organisation tries to accomplish?

¹<http://afa.at/vimun/vimuncommittees2014.htm>.

²<http://afa.at/vimun/positionpapers.pdf>.

Remember that you have to represent the position of your country/organisation in the Committee. Therefore you should not speak in the first person ("I"), but with the voice of the country you represent (for example: "Algeria suggests...", "Germany proposes...."). You may offer your own ideas for a solution of the problem, but always make sure that these ideas do not contradict the policies of the country you represent.

The deadline for the position papers will be 25 July!

Contact details

All Chairs can be contacted via the following e-mail address: ecosoc.vimun@afa.at