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# ASSEN MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2020

## **COMMITTEE GUIDE**

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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*Ensuring universal primary and secondary  
education for all*

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## CHAIRS

### **Elke de Jong**

Hi, I am Elke, 17 years old and a Gymnasium 6 student at Vincent van Gogh in Assen. I have participated in multiple MUNs over the last two years. Being a delegate at the MUNs has been great experience for me! Jokes are always welcome in my committee, but punishments will also be given when necessary, you can count on that. I hope to achieve good results with the committee, but most importantly to make ASMUN 2020 a fun experience for you!

### **Merle Marit Heegen**

Hello, I am Merle Marit Heegen and I am 17 years old. I am currently in 5 VWO at Vincent van Gogh. Last year I have attended HSPMUN and OLMUN, but this year will be the first time that I am chairing. As a chair I hope that I can make ASMUN as fun for you guys as the MUNs were for me. To do so me and my fellow chair will make sure to think of some fun punishments :)

## WRITER

Honourable delegates,

Welcome to the Assen Model United Nations (ASMUN) 2020 conference! I am Anya Deshpande, part of the Inner Circle of ASMUN 2020 and writer of this committee guide.

As the Inner Circle, we are honoured to welcome you to the third conference of ASMUN. We are looking forward to seeing you and hearing your ideas for solving crucial international problems.

Our generation is currently witnessing a world of unprecedented change and development, however there is a need for improving and resolving many current world issues. This is why I have chosen to write the committee guide of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), concerning improving universal primary and secondary education.

Education gives us knowledge of the world and develops our perspectives for the better. Education plays a significant role for the society, for nations and the world as a whole but also for the individual itself. Therefore, ensuring education for all is essential for a better future. Keep in mind, "Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

On a final note, during the third edition of ASMUN you will be given an opportunity to discuss about present and future issues, to learn, interact with new people and finally, share thoughts.

Sincerely,  
Anya Deshpande  
Inner Circle ASMUN 2020  
Treasurer

## COUNTRIES IN THE COMMITTEE:

- Angola
- Armenia
- Brazil
- Cambodia
- Canada
- China
- Denmark
- Ethiopia
- France
- Germany
- India
- Ireland
- Japan
- Netherlands
- Pakistan
- Saudi Arabia
- Sudan
- Sweden
- Syria
- Iceland
- Kazakhstan
- Turkey
- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- Yemen



## INTRODUCTION AND TASK

Dear delegates, welcome to the committee of the Economic and Social Council. It is one of the five main organs of the United Nations. ECOSOC's responsibility lies at coordinating almost every aspect that has to do with economic and social problems discussed by the United Nations. Examples of their goals are to:

- Have (to a certain extent) economically stabilized countries;
- Have human rights everywhere in the world counting for every single individual, despite your gender or background for example.

Currently one of ECOSOC's goals is to ensure universal primary and secondary education for all. Education is the number one driving force of progress on a national as well as an individual scale. However, till present, many children in the world are not receiving basic education, due to costs, lack of infrastructure or humanitarian emergencies. In order to provide better education for all children, the international community needs to undertake action.

Delegates, it is now your task to find solutions for this issue, to give children the hope for a better future.



## HISTORY OF ECOSOC

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was established as one of the six main or principal organs of the United Nations (UN). ECOSOC is considered to be the biggest and most complex subsidiary body of the United Nations. In short the function of ECOSOC can be described as being responsible for directing and coordinating the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian activities which are carried out by the United Nations. For example, ECOSOC has the main responsibility within the United Nations to follow up on all major past international conferences linked to the sustainable development goals. ECOSOC was one of the biggest players during the examination of the Millennium Development Goals and during the implementation of the new sustainable development goals for 2030. First of all, it's important to know that ECOSOC does not only consist of delegations of states, because NGO's participate in their work too as they have a consultative status. In 1965 and in 1974 the ECOSOC the number of members was changed after an amendment. Where there used to be 18 states/ members, there are now 54 members as a consequence of the amendments. The ECOSOC membership is based on geographic representation, which means that every geographical based area (for example continents) has a fixed number of members. For ECOSOC counts

that Africa has the highest number of members, which is 14. Western Europe and North America have one seat less, so 13 seats.<sup>1</sup> Seats are allocated to Asia, where Latin America and Caribbean states have a total of 10 seats together. The last 6 members are from East European states. Every three years there are elections, (which take place at the General Assembly,) to choose new member states for ECOSOC. The elections for presidency however are held annually and the president gets chosen from one of the countries with relatively less power. The current president is Ms. Inga Rhonda King, a delegate of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. A decision can only be taken if there is a simple majority (more than 50% vote in favour). In 2005, during the ECOSOC World Summit, the decision was taken to organise meetings every, whereby they discuss the progress made on the internationally agreed development goals.<sup>2</sup> In 2013, the most far-reaching reform of the Economic and Social Council since 1991 was taken by the General Assembly: the adoption of resolution 68/1. 'Resolution 68/1 makes sure that ECOSOC is in a leading position when identifying emerging challenges and promoting reflection, debate and innovative thinking on development, as well as in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. In addition, it makes it possible for ECOSOC to convene a special meeting at another UN location to address urgent developments.

## GOAL OF THE SESSION

The United Nations takes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seriously. Goal 4 of the SDG is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all girls and boys. For the past 200 years, giant leaps have been taken in the field of education. However, in 2017, over 61 million children do not get primary education and 202 million children do not receive secondary education. Causes of these include lack of quality education, poverty or due to fragile countries and conflict zones. Therefore, the UN has called the members of ECOSOC together to discuss the topic of ensuring primary and secondary education for all. A suitable resolution to this issue should contain solutions to problems such as:

- Developing regions/countries cannot afford schooling fees;
- Lack of infrastructure required for a functioning education system, for example remote and far-flung regions;
- Regions undergoing humanitarian emergencies like conflict zones/wars, or natural disasters like flooding;
- Lack of education in nations hindering economic growth;
- Girls around the world experiencing gender discrimination at schools.

## HISTORY OF EDUCATION

Throughout the past decades, education is recognized as one of the driving forces of the society. Education gives us knowledge of the world around us. It is an essential part of someone's childhood. Despite its importance, many children still do not have access to education till date. Mainly in developing and developed countries, children do not have access to basic education due to financial deficit, gender inequalities, conflict zones or health troubles.

Financial deficit in education of developing countries is a major issue. Many emerging countries do not provide schools with adequate financial resources leading to a fragile education system. As a result of poverty and marginalization, more than 61 million young children remain unschooled. Regions which are mainly affected by this are Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Eastern Asia as well as Pacific; Sub-Saharan Africa with over 32 million children without education and Asia with over 27 million unschooled children. Essentially in Sub-Saharan Africa, majority of the children receive an education for only less than four years. In countries such as Somalia and Burkina Faso the situation is worse, where the majority goes to school for less than two years.

In addition, more than 54% of the unschooled children are girls. This mainly occurs in Arab states and Asia, where males are given a privilege to receive education whilst girls are destined to work in the family home. In Arab States such as Yemen, 80% of the girls will not have the opportunity to go to school.

The lack of education in a nation greatly affects the population in a negative way, which impedes the social and economic development of the aforementioned nations. Developing countries have certainly improved compared to decades back, however a lot of effort is necessary in order to achieve universal primary education.

It is up to ECOSOC to draft a suitable resolution for these vulnerable states in order to ensure an intellectual and knowledgeable population in the future, but also to ensure social and economic development.





## **BLOC POSITIONS**

### **EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

The prosperous European countries support the idea of improving local education and are certainly willing to give aid to developing other nations in need. The EU has a strong commitment to support actions on education in around 100 countries through ways of funding. In many nations undergoing conflict and crisis, European countries strongly urge other nations to provide humanitarian aid to ensure education for children. The EU has been increasing its support to fragile countries both by increasing the share of humanitarian aid allocated to education, as well as by allocating a larger proportion of bilateral development assistance to fragile and crisis-affected countries.

### **NORTH AMERICA**

About 100 years ago, North America made secondary education in high school compulsory. It was a massive leap forward, and it drove a lot of our economic boom over the past 100 years. Till date, North America is willing to improve their local education when needed. Moreover, North America, similar to European nations, provides financial aid to countries in Africa, Arab states and Asia in order to help ensure and improve education.

### **AFRICA**

From the past to the present, nations in Africa have been struggling to ensure education for all children in their countries. Due to lack of finances and lack of infrastructure, children are unable to go to school. Countries in Africa have a low economy to ensure education by themselves, and moreover the gender gap does not seem to reduce. Take for example Somalia or Sudan. It is obvious that these nations certainly need to resolve this issue as much as possible, but is clearly not possible without a helping hand.

### **MIDDLE EAST**

Countries in the Middle East have been experiencing conflict for decades. However, the Middle East has quadrupled the average level of schooling since 1960, halved illiteracy since 1980 and achieved almost complete gender parity for primary education. But many school age children cannot go to school in Syria, for instance. Due to the refugee crisis and conflicts, one in five schools no longer functions because thousands of schools have been destroyed or damaged, and others are being used to shelter internally displaced people. Schools lack books, desks, and sanitation facilities; in some areas many teachers have fled. Several children from warzones in the Middle East live and attend school in neighbouring countries such as Turkey and Lebanon.

## **ASIA**

In parts of Asia there is a lack of accessibility to educational institutions. In Indonesia, some children walk on cliffs to get to school or some Bangladeshi children have to walk long distances through the blazing heat. In certain Asian countries, accessibility to schools is a massive obstacle. However, due to the booming economy of Asia nowadays, accessibility is improving because of heavy investments. Yet there are large differences in schooling access across the countries of Asia as well as between different socioeconomic and demographic groups within countries. Therefore, due to financial deficit in certain countries, the quality of education is relatively low, whilst other nations are showing significant improvement.

## **LATIN AMERICA**

One of the main reasons of Latin America's slow growth is poor governance. Latin America's education systems bear much of the blame. For instance, Brazil and Mexico, they are one of the two biggest economies in this region and for these countries the situation does not improve; low quality of education or lack of educational resources. Yet countries such as Cuba and Argentina show the importance of education and economic growth. For example, Cuba has a high literacy rate with no gender gap despite its rural areas. The Cuban government can legislate and enforce their decisions. This is not as simple for more democratic and liberal nations. And yet, a large amount of the success comes from the fact that the Cuban government invest heavily in their education system to ameliorate the quality; the largest part of their national budget is dedicated to education. The education in Latin America is therefore very varied.

## QARMAs (Questions a Resolution Must Answer)

1. Is education a domestic or international issue?
2. What are your country's cultural and social factors concerning schooling for girls?
3. How does lack of education in a country affect the nation?
4. How could countries improve education despite financial deficits?
5. Which measures can be adopted by ECOSOC to improve the access to primary and secondary education in your country / worldwide?

## SOURCES

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