Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Study Guide
Topic A: Promoting the creation of jobs in the sustainable technologies sector

Introduction

It is true, that the issue of development has been one of high priority in the agenda of all governments of nations in past years. Up until now, however, it seems that the whole notion of development was connected with rather cliché ways of its achievement, through methods such as sufficient energy production or lowering costs (e.g. of energy production and governmental expenses). However, as many organisations like the International Energy Agency (IEA) have reported, non-renewable energy sources like oil, coal and others are close to depletion within a few more decades. Moreover, measures, like the austerity program that is currently applied in most countries of the European Union, have been criticised for not only failing to create the necessary substrate for development initiation, but also actually further impeding the economic stability of nations. These are only some of the reasons for which nations have started thinking about alternative solutions and programs that can substantially boost their development, ideally resulting in profit as well as a stable well being of their people. Although most nations agree in the fact that lowering overall economic costs and focusing on the financial sector could be an effective solution to the problem, they also seem to be worried about the possibility of ensuring development. This is because development and growth are both dependent on the existence of capital and resources. While the first is relatively easier to control since man can manipulate it, the latter is more influenced by nature itself, which humans can do little to alter. The question then arises of how humans can ensure that this aspect of development, dependent on nature and its resources, will pursue, especially with the foreseeable future of natural resource depletion.

The notion of sustainable development and growth began many years ago, and is actually derived from the first established term of sustainability that was initially
connected to forestry. William A. Duerr, a leading American expert on forestry, was one of the first (in modern ages) to stress the fact that sustainable development refers to the careful, monitored and efficient overlapping between three sub-sectors of development; the environmental, social and economic. According to Duerr, nations should not focus on any of these sectors individually, but rather, find ways of combining and ensuring development in all three sectors. The Economic and Social Council has made many attempts and held many sessions in the past to confront this issue, but solutions so far have never successfully managed to place equal focus on all three sectors, and thus sustainable development still remains a very difficult issue to deal with, calling for dire attention from the international community.

However, innovative energy sources must not only be renewable, but also produce low levels of greenhouse gasses (GHGs). Our environment is currently being more and more heavily polluted due to the high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and one of the largest culprits, with the highest GHG emissions, is the energy industry. A large majority of global GHG emissions result from the exploitation of energy sources, and such GHG emissions lead to catastrophic consequences to the environment.

We have already developed many new ways of exploiting new energy sources, but a major issue now is making such energy forms globally accessible. These new methods of obtaining energy mostly require high technical expertise, as well as being expensive to initiate. However, for them to be effective in solving the energy crisis that will soon hit in coming decades if nothing is done, these innovative forms of energy must be made accessible to the entire world, so that global fossil fuel consumption can be effectively eliminated. By doing this, we can ensure that we will be able to sustain our current lifestyles without damaging our environment or livelihood in the future.
Definitions of key terms

**Economic growth**

As defined by the online newspaper “The Economist”, economic growth refers to an increase in the capacity of an economy to produce goods and services, compared from one period of time to another. Economic growth can be measured in nominal terms, which includes possible inflation, or in real terms, which are adjusted for inflation. For comparing one country’s economic growth to another, GDP or GNP per capita should be used, as these take into account population differences between countries.

**Social Development**

As defined by the Commission for Social Development of ECOSOC, social development aims to bring about sustained improvement in the well being of the individual, family, community and society at large. The reduction or eradication of mass poverty, inequality and conditions of underdevelopment are widely accepted indicators of social progress. The dimensions of social development are: social welfare, health, education, housing, urban and rural development; and land reform.

**Sustainable development**

As defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: 1) the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and 2) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.

**Natural factors of production**

Natural factors consist of a country’s endowments in natural resources; these may
include minerals, forests, and arable land for agriculture and plant and animal diversity. Natural resources do not only correspond to a nation’s potential for more sustainable energy production in terms of quantity, but their quality and quantity also define the extent to which the well-being of the nation’s people is maintained, something very vital for social development to occur.

Human resources comprise of the skills, knowledge, experience, education and health of the population, which makes up the labour pool. Investment in these areas, often called social investment, increases human capital. Human resources are the ones that operate the markets and ensure their optimal functionality. Innovation and scientifically improved development all stems from human creativity and productivity, aspects of the human resources that significantly play a role in social development. Human resources does not only guarantee the existence of development, but also creates more comfortable and viable solutions for the people and therefore, social development.

**Background information**

Enabling creation of jobs in the sustainable energy sector can only be achieved if innovative energy forms are used in the appropriate context and in such a way that they are not a liability to current local and national power grids. For access to these energy forms to be successful in reducing the negative effects of current energy sources, organisations must be able to effectively use these innovative forms of energy, especially with respect to their required technical expertise and environmental specifications. As can be seen in the map below, depicting the current locations of the majority of renewable energy producers (representative of all innovative forms of energy), it is clear that the current spread of innovative energy providers is not internationally evenly distributed.
This is why this issue is becoming increasingly relevant, because the universal production of new forms of energy is crucial to the global accessibility of these new forms of energy. Consequently, this will hugely impact the future of our planet, as well as our energy resources.

**Effective use of energy sources**

There are many different types of energy sources, which can be classified as innovative. These vary in development status as well as efficiency and productivity, depending on where, when and how these sources are exploited. Environmental factors are usually very important to the effectiveness of an energy resource, but social and economic factors can often also affect the feasibility of exploiting certain sources. These environmental, social and economic specifications often hinder the establishment of these innovative energy sources universally. It is beneficial to have the knowledge and technology to be able to exploit these innovative resources, but if not used in the correct natural, social and economic environment, they will not be a solution to the imminent energy problems, but
rather a liability to our livelihood.

**Environmental factors**

The environment can disrupt the effectiveness of many energy sources in several ways. For example, the temperature, altitude, latitude and longitude of the region, as well as prominent winds, all could act as factors to the effectiveness of an energy resource such as hydroelectric or wind energy. These factors can have both positive and negative impacts on the production of energy. For example, solar power can be affected by several of the aforementioned factors. Obviously, it is affected by direct sun exposure, but also by the altitude, because if the collection device is higher up, there is less interference by the atmosphere, thus more energy can be captured. This shows that any type of energy source could be affected by multiple environmental factors. Due to such strict environmental factors, not all areas of the world are equally effective locations for energy plants. The map below indicates where the most renewable energy potential lies on Earth, categorized by the type of renewable energy in question.
Social factors

Many energy forms require space to be effective, which causes the problem of connecting energy production sites to important agglomerations of the population, where the energy is needed. Social factors that affect the implementation of innovative energy plants can also include health and safety risks associated with these sources of energy. For example, nuclear power has a negative connotation because of its potential dangers and risks. However, it is, in reality, one of the most efficient and productive forms of energy available. Many are scared of the risks of the exploitation of this type of energy source, fed by the recent media frenzy surrounding the consequences of a nuclear energy plant disaster in Japan. Therefore, many are not willing to live in close proximity to such a nuclear power plant. This consequently makes these sorts of power plants less attractive for governments to implement. This sort of an issue can be seen in a less drastic form when considering wind energy. Many do not want wind farms placed near their homes due to the noise and scenic disruption. Therefore, this makes such energy forms less attractive to governments.

Economic factors

Economic factors are related to the price of obtaining energy from these sources. It costs a lot to produce and place certain types of energy plants. Due to the technical aspect of a lot of these systems, they can be extremely expensive, and therefore unfeasible for certain countries and organisations. Because of these high prices, such energy plants are often also undesirable to implement, as the energy produced in these plants are often not worth the high cost of its implementation and maintenance.

All of these different factors are interlinked and create very specific circumstances for the implementation of different exploitable forms of energy. This means that choosing the appropriate energy system to meet its matching criteria is important
in order to ensure the system provides maximum energy yield.

**Innovative energy forms**

There are many types of innovative energy forms that are currently in use or being researched. These new energy forms attempt to ensure less loss of livelihood and environment than their predecessors, the fossil fuels.

**Solar power**

The sun is the ultimate source for almost all available energy sources, from fossil fuels to direct solar radiation. Through photovoltaic cells, the sun’s radiation can be converted directly into electricity. This system is effective when used in its small-scale form, often able to supply enough energy for single households. However, it is not effective enough to be depended on to provide electricity for an entire city or region, because too large of a surface area would be needed that it wouldn’t be efficient or feasible. Furthermore, solar cells are less effective in extremely southern, northern, or cloudy areas, as these cells depend on direct sun exposure for energy. Another limitation is that solar cells are unable to collect energy throughout the entire day, but only when the sun is up and strong enough.

A different method of using solar energy is specifically for the production of heat. Electricity can then obtained when the heat turns a turbine, like in the case of most traditional power stations. However, this is a less effective way of using the sun’s energy than solar cells, and is only helpful in directly providing heat for central heating and cooking in areas where the electrical grid system has not yet been put in place. This type of panel has the same limitations as the photovoltaic cells. Thirdly, the concept of solar ovens has also developed over the years. These use the sun’s energy specifically for cooking, requiring high intensity solar radiation, but are relatively simple to create, thus more accessible to all.
Wind power

Wind power has improved majorly in the past decade. It started in the form of simple windmills with limited use and efficiency, but has now developed into the current, advanced wind turbines. However, the problem with this type of energy is that it requires specialist equipment to create and put into place, making them quite expensive for most countries without the expertise. For example, in the Netherlands, it is relatively cheaper to install such a turbine, because of prior experience and advanced research that cut the costs. On the other hand, if these were to be brought outside of the Netherlands into Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs), there would be a much larger bill for their installation and transportation, especially if this would be one of the first of the turbines to be installed in the country. Also, a country like the Netherlands experiences wind in abundance, thus the efficiency of these turbines is greater in the Netherlands than many other nations with less wind exposure. Therefore, it is clear that the effectiveness of a wind turbine is very much dependent on the environment it is working in. Currently, wind power is one of the most efficient renewable energy sources around; however, research is still being conducted to redesign the turbine completely in order to maximize efficiency further.

Hydroelectric power

This type of power originates from the water wheel. It uses gravity, which accelerates water as it drops from higher land to lower land, in order to turn a turbine that creates electricity. When man-made, these are usually extremely large and expensive projects, requiring a dam to hold the water back when not in use. They are also environmentally limited, as they need to be on a river. Another negative aspect is that its construction often means the destruction of fertile lands and/or delocalisation of populations. However, hydroelectric power plants are able
to produce electricity abundantly, even in a large-scale form, if successfully constructed and maintained.

**Tidal power**

This form of energy, like hydroelectric power, requires water. However, this uses the tidal forces of the world’s seas and oceans instead of gravity. This energy is usually collected in the form of a buoy floating in water, which gets moved as the tide progresses in and out. This movement is then captured and transformed into energy. The main issue with tidal power is, once again, the economic cost, as well as the potential damage to sea life, if not placed in consideration to the marine ecosystems around it. Furthermore, this form of energy is relatively under-developed, and thus is unable to produce large amounts of consistent energy, despite high costs. Therefore, it is usually not the preferred form of energy to exploit.

**Nuclear power**

Nuclear power consists of fission and fusion energy. Fission is the most common type of nuclear power, where energy is released when nuclei of atoms split into smaller parts. This requires very specific conditions for efficiency and safety, making the entire process extremely expensive. Furthermore, dangerous nuclear waste is a by-product in the process, which can often be difficult to expose of. However, from the currently available forms of renewable energy, nuclear power is the one least dependent on the environment, thus able to be easily manipulated by man, and produce energy most consistently. It produces large amounts of energy from a small mass of starting material. It does not use much raw material relative to the amount of energy it produces.
Fusion, on the other hand, is a much newer type of technology, which is yet to be tamed for proper use in power stations. This is the opposite of the fission concept. Here, energy is created when atomic nuclei join together, similar to how energy is created in the sun. However, scientists are still working on maintaining complete control of the process over an extensive time period. Furthermore, such fusion processes can only occur under extremely high temperatures, thus, at its current state of development, the energy output does not exceed the energy input by much. However, with further development, fusion energy has the potential for a high-energy output whilst using simple and abundant materials found worldwide.

Geothermal power

This is a source of energy coming from the earth’s core. The natural heat from the core of the earth is extracted to boil water and, consequently, spin a turbine. This type of energy is mostly obtained in areas where the earth’s crust is very thin, or in places where there are natural heat releases, such as volcanoes. In these locations, it is easier to drill through the earth’s crust to obtain the energy. Therefore, due to its environmental limitations, geothermal power is only of limited use. Furthermore, drilling deep through the Earth’s crust to obtain this energy is extremely difficult and expensive, especially for large-scale use.

Since the majority of More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) were the pioneers of these innovative forms of energy, having full accessibility to their construction, efforts need to be focused on the LEDCs. Since many of these countries do not have full, or even any, central power system, it is essential that when such systems are developed or upgraded, they must be integrated in such a way that will allow countries to have energy without affecting their environment, society or economy negatively. These innovative forms of energy must be made available to such nations from the very beginning, not only after non-renewable energy sources expire, like the current situation in MEDCs. Pollution from these
systems must also be ensured to remain low from the very beginning, so that such systems are made sustainable as soon as possible. LEDCs have none, or very inefficient centralised energy systems, therefore only able to provide limited electricity to their populations. Furthermore, the lack of expertise and funding in these nations stand as large obstacles preventing progress and development in supplying energy to all. Here lies great potential for improvement, making LEDCs ideal platforms to start the change to sustainable and renewable energy source exploitation on a large scale.

**Major Countries and Organizations Involved**

**The Netherlands**

The Netherlands is one of the leading countries in the field of wind power. The country has 2,000 onshore wind turbines and 96 offshore ones, accountable for a total of just over 4% of the country’s entire energy production. They have some of the most advanced technologies in this field. They are not the largest country in terms of production of wind power, but when placed relative to the size of the country; it is leading the wind power industry. Despite the country with the largest wind energy production being Germany currently, with over 22,000 megawatts, the Netherlands has just entered a ten-year program where they aim to increase the output of their wind power for onshore wind turbines to over 6,000 megawatts, a huge investment in innovative energy forms for the nation.

**Spain**

Spain is one of the leading countries of solar power production. Solar power consists of around 10% of Spain’s energy production. Their Solúcar wind farm covers just less than 8 square kilometres of Spanish countryside, and is one of the world’s most advanced wind farms.

**Germany**
In recent years, Germany has suddenly increased its solar and wind energy production, currently making it one of the leading countries in terms of capacity for these types of energy. There has been an increase in the research and development of innovative energy forms, supported by the German government. The government itself have also stated that their current priorities are in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

**France**

France is the leading country in nuclear power, whilst simultaneously never having experienced any large-scale nuclear meltdown or any power station crisis. The nuclear power plants in France produce a total of over 63,000 megawatts of energy from 58 power stations, accumulating to just over 77% of France’s total power production. The French are also the leading nuclear energy researchers, especially in the field of nuclear fusion. Furthermore, they are the world’s largest net exporters of electricity. The reason they are able to have such a high export rate is due to the extremely large amounts of electricity that their nuclear power plants are able to produce.

**European Union (EU)**

As demonstrated by the impressive accomplishments of the aforementioned nations, the EU is one of the leading regions for the production and supply of innovative forms of energy. They are thus an example for all other nations worldwide. The European commission has also committed itself to providing sustainable energy to all in its ‘Energizing Development initiative’.

**International Energy Agency (IEA)**

The IEA is an autonomous organisation, which is tasked with ensuring reliable, affordable and clean energy to its 28 member states. The IEA mainly focuses on energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and global engagement in terms of energy production. The IEA also works with non-member states to find solutions to shared energy and environmental concerns. They have
stated that they believe having a “clean energy revolution” will increase energy security. Therefore, the IEA has a special research and analysis program to improve and provide clean energy in order to ensure the “clean energy revolution” can be achieved.

**United Nations Development Program (UNDP)**

This organisation is responsible for all development issues in the UN. Energy sourcing and electricity provision is an essential part of development, being a key issue in any developing country. Therefore, the UNDP is very much involved in promoting efforts attempting to provide this energy to LEDCs. The UNDP believes that subsidies should be removed from fossil fuels such as oil, and should be placed on renewable and sustainable energy sources, to stimulate development in the right direction.

**Timeline of Events**

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td></td>
<td>(also known as the Rio Conference or Earth Summit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg</td>
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<td>December, 2007</td>
<td>Bali Climate Change Conference</td>
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International Year of Sustainable Energy for All

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>International Year of Sustainable Energy for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>June, 2012</td>
<td>Rio +20 (also known as Rio Earth Summit 2012)</td>
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<td>2030</td>
<td>The deadline set by the Sustainable Energy for All program</td>
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**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

- 2012 – International Year of Sustainable Energy for All

**Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

There have been no real failed attempts at solving this issue. However, implementing such large-scale programs takes time, which is why their success cannot be measured so quickly, especially since this is a relatively new issue for the UN. This means that there is not much data in terms of the success of previous attempts at resolving this issue.
National / EU

Many national programs exist that promote new sustainable energy forms. The Netherlands, for example, has set a program to increase their percentage capacity of sustainable energy compared to other energy production methods from 4% to 14% in 2020. The EU itself has also launched the “Energizing Development initiative”, which plans to provide the developing world with support and assistance in enabling access to sustainable energy. They have also committed themselves to provide 500 million people with this access to sustainable energy sources by 2030.

International / Kyoto Protocol

In 1997, 141 countries met in Kyoto to discuss greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in general. From these discussions came a legally-binding agreement between all ratified countries, to implement national greenhouse gas emission reductions. These targets were to be completed before the final meeting in Doha, November 2012. However, out of all the nations who were present, only 34 industrialised countries signed and ratified the Kyoto protocol. Because of this lack of activity, the protocol only started to take action in 2004. As a consequence, not many of these targets have been reached, apart from Europe, which has seen large improvements. In November 2012, the review summit in Doha took place. The possibility of extending the deadline and updating targets were all issues on the Doha agenda.
Possible Solutions

There are several possible methods to promote jobs in the sector of innovative and sustainable energy. It is said that over 95% of the people who do not have access to modern energy services are either in Sub-Saharan Africa, or developing Asia. It is thus clear that these are the areas in most dire need of aid, and therefore should be the primary target of potential solutions.

Development and research

It is important that the correct types of energy production systems are used in the best way and environment, to make them as effective as possible. To do this, the expertise of nations already with substantial programs for sustainable energy should be promoted and made universally accessible. Furthermore, such energy systems need to be made more resilient to environmental changes, giving such systems increased efficiency, even in less optimal environmental circumstances.

Costs

The costs of implementing such energy systems must be decreased, especially for LEDCs. Possible solutions to this could be the provision of subsidies for the sustainable energy industry and their products. Such an incentive, if only excluded to LEDCs, would also promote sustainable energy companies to expand their markets to LEDCs. The ultimate goal of this issue is to make innovative energy technologies available and attainable in LEDCs, especially because most MEDCs already employ ongoing programs to expand their sustainable energy capacity, whereas LEDCs mostly don’t have that ability, and thus require international aid.
It is also important to create a demand and positive backdrop for these new sustainable energy systems around the world. To do this, educating the public so they understand the enormous benefits of these energy systems is crucial. A more forceful way of promoting the necessary demand is by placing incentives on the use of these energy sources, or sanctions for the use of alternative energy sources.

**Promoting private innovative energy production**

Private energy production also deserves recognition. Not only would this type of energy production promote the use of innovative forms of energy, but also represent a sustainable development in the promotion of such technologies. The ultimate goal is for global energy production to consist mainly of innovative energy forms, and because a large portion of energy production is private, this sector cannot be neglected. By implementing this, people and nations become more self-dependent and sustainable. This will help countries and others who are reluctant to install these systems, to see the benefits of this type of energy.

**International communication and cooperation**

There are several United Nations Organisations (UNOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that are already dealing specifically with this issue. We need to use their expertise and experience as knowledge bases for any future programs, as they can provide the most accurate overview and most reliable advice, having specifically researched and experimented with this issue. To use our available resources well, the expertise of UNOs, NGOs and relevant countries is imperative. Therefore, it might be a productive idea to set up international programs and conferences as a way of creating dialogue between nations and organizations to improve existing technologies, as well as develop new ones.

These are just a few of several ways in which universal access to innovative forms
of energy can be promoted in the near future. We need to assure this issue is resolved soon to be able to avoid the impending exhaustion of our key energy resources, so we can replace their production before we are hit with their depletion. Everyone must be made a potential stakeholder in future plans for innovative energy development.

Bibliography


Appendix or Appendices

II. Johannesburg Plan of Implementation created at the Earth Summit

III. Dutch government plans for increasing their sustainable energy capacity:
http://www.government.nl/issues/energy/sustainable-energy

IV. The top six solar power countries in terms of their megawatt capacity of solar power:
http://planetsave.com/2012/03/06/top-6-countries-using-solar-energy/

V. Energy innovation in German, Japan and Brazil, PowerPoint:

VI. The International Energy Agency:
http://www.iea.org/
Topic B: The proliferation of the practice of unpaid internships

Introduction

Internship is not a fundamentally new phenomenon of the labour market. Apprenticeships have existed throughout much of the world for centuries and in many ways resembled internships. Today, however, internships often become the gateway for employment for the vast majority of graduates. In the ever more contested market for jobs combined with the slow recovery from 2007-2009 recession in Europe and North America as well as slower rates of growth in the emerging markets having existing work experience in the relevant industry is seen as a prerequisite for the vast majority of graduates. While some industries such as medicine, engineering and science offer base salaries to interns, many others such as the media or arts use free labour force of interns for many months and often years. Intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations also offer only unpaid internships to students.

The issue of proliferation of unpaid internships creates a variety of adverse implications. First of all, equality and fair access to labour market is at stake, as graduates from less affluent socio-economic classes often cannot afford to work extended periods of time without salary and have instead to opt for lower-skilled paid jobs or traineeships. Thus only those able to cover their own expenses during the internship are able to secure entry to highly-skilled industries, such as law, international relations, the media and arts. Secondly, outright opportunism and abuse towards availability of excess young labour force is often observed among corporations in Europe and Asia that tend to accept unpaid interns for the period of 6 or 12 months and at the end they only offer permanent paid positions to a small fraction of interns; the vast majority will simply be replaced by a new cohort of unpaid interns, reducing operating costs for companies, but leaving young graduates without any earnings. Lastly, since early 2000s there has been an
increase in professional coaching services and networks that “sell” internship placements at various companies and organizations at premium.

Thus ultimately, it is students themselves who have to pay up to $5’000 to be able to work for free for one year\(^v\). Such conditions clearly open opportunities to abuse young graduates seeking employment and disadvantage those who are not able to afford unpaid internships, thus essentially handicapping the promise of equality of access to employment for all students, based on merit only.

At this committee session of ECOSOC, delegates will be expected to discuss the issue of proliferation of the practice of unpaid internships, consider its implications and to propose working solutions or adjustments with particular attention to differences between various regional labour markets.

**History of the Problem**

The only pre-modern existence of internship-like work experience existed in middle-ages trade guilds in Northwestern Europe, whereby workers would pay their master to learn his trade by working alongside him. Following industrialization apprenticeships have been replaced by vocational training. Indeed, during the time of establishment of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1919 and during the subsequent conventions created within the organization, the issue of unpaid internships was not on agenda\(^vi\). Internships in their modern form emerged towards the end of the 1980s and were limited to business schools and spread into the areas of communications and general management during the 1990s\(^vii\).

Throughout the 2000s practice of work experience has become commonplace across a range of skilled industries including law, finance, sciences, government, media and arts, many of which are symbolically renumerated or unpaid. National governments in OECD countries have started recognizing the issue of unpaid
internships since the late 2000s, when the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and France among others implemented national regulations to improve welfare conditions of interns or to create incentives for private sector to offer minimum salary to interns. Moreover, small international movements and NGOs have started demanding better conditions for interns at international organizations. However, as of 2014, the practice of unpaid internships has been spreading across both private and public sector and "has developed... into a global phenomenon"\textsuperscript{viii}, further exacerbating the issue of elitism in highly-skilled industries due to financial barriers for interns. There is no comprehensive data on the number of unpaid interns globally, so the exact number of affected people is unclear. However, with tentative figures suggested by national ombudsmen of the OECD countries, there are at the very least 3 million unpaid interns worldwide as of 2014 and the figure is likely to over 10 million in reality, as student employment organization Young Worker Legal Service in Canada suggests that the figures are underreported and are likely to be 3 times higher\textsuperscript{ix}.

\textbf{Statement of the Problem}

There seems to be a legal vacuum in international conventions and national legislations on the question of internships and traineeships. Due to underregulation of the area, unpaid internships have become a lucrative mode of employment of young graduates at no cost for the firms or organization. While interns are often expected to work hours and perform tasks of a full-time employee, their lack of salary, benefits or social protection, which could amount to abuse of Part 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in particular Article 6 (The Right to Work Under Just and Favourable Conditions), Article 9 (The Right to Social Security) and Article 11 (The Right to an Adequate Standard of Living)\textsuperscript{x}. Indeed, working full-time for extended periods of time with no salary can amount to unjust and unfair conditions and will prevent
According to the US-based NGO dealing with the rights of interns “Intern Bridge”, in 2012 Salary Survey, 83% of unpaid interns stated that they did not receive a job offer after completion of their internship\textsuperscript{xi}. This means that students will have worked full-time for free for periods up to 1 year, covering their own living and accommodation expenses, while the likelihood of their employment is very low, as they can be easily replaced by a new cohort of unpaid graduate interns looking for work experience. This creates conditions of willful exploiting of unpaid labour, as interns are mainly hired to minimize production costs for firms and organisations. Moreover, since their work is unpaid, no income tax will be received by the national governments from their employment.

The United Nations itself has faced calls for structural reforms of its internship policy. While maintaining the policy of promoting participation in global governance by young global citizens from all over the world, none of the internship positions at the UN or any of its branches and subsidiaries are paid. Moreover, the two largest headquarters of the UN are located in New York and Geneva, which are, according to Mercer, the most expensive cities to live in North America and Europe respectively\textsuperscript{xii}. Therefore even from within the OECD countries only selected few can afford to spend 1 year completing unpaid internship in these cities, while for graduates from LEDC countries where average annual incomes can be lower than monthly expenses in New York or Geneva, the financial barrier is impenetrable to the overwhelming majority from the least developing countries, thus preventing engaged global youth from essentially participating in the UN mechanisms. Moreover, according to the Office of Human Resources of the United Nations Headquarters in New York even upon completion of the internship, the UN does not permit employment of the interns within at least 6 months following the end of the internship\textsuperscript{xiii}.

Final aspect of the debate is the extent to which the government should intervene into the labour markets. As of now there are no international conventions or
treaties in force specifically addressing interns and trainees and thus the debate enters the realm of interventionalism vs. laissez-faire plane of economics. Those advocating state regulating of internships point out that minimal salaries and basis social security conditions for interns must be protected, while supporters of laissez-faire point out that prohibition of unpaid internships would significantly decrease the range of opportunities for students to gain work experience and would also distort the market equilibrium for labour. The focal point of this debate is to find the compromise between protecting young graduates from abusive exploitation, allow freedom of enterprises in their hiring policies and maximize the efficiency of economic growth and innovation – all these aspects are actively promoted by ECOSOC and other UN mechanisms.

Delegates will be invited to consider these aspects of the problem during the Committee Session as well as to bring up those aspects particularly relevant to the national interests of the countries they represent.

Current Situation

Internships have become a norm to be an addition to competed undergraduate and graduate degrees for those intent on entering a variety of skilled industries. As of 2014, all Fortune Global 500 companies that constitute the largest corporations in the world by revenue offer internships. There is no existing comprehensive study on the percentage of unpaid internships, but the vast majority of established and large corporations offer competitive salaries for interns. Some firms such as Google or Goldman Sachs offer salaries in excess of $2’000 per month to their interns. However, the competition for an internship place at such companies can reach 50 highly-qualified persons for 1 place. Thus the vast majority of students will apply to smaller businesses unable to pay large salaries, or start-up firms offering no pay. Alternatively, they can apply to industries traditionally associated with unpaid
internships and work experiences, such as the government, international relations, the media, arts and show business.

The so-called Catch-22 situation that many graduates are facing today is the fact that they graduate with a specialized degree but are unable to secure employment due to lack of work experience, yet they often cannot secure work experience due to it being unpaid. Eventually they end up working at positions that do not require any specialist knowledge. Considering that in most countries in the world families save money or take out loans in banks to pay for university education, young people end up being in debt for the degree whose benefits they are unable to utilize due to existing conditions of internships markets.

In LEDC’s the issue of internships is less pressing than the general problem of underemployment of young graduates and emigration of qualified individuals. Therefore, the problem in these countries is to introduce a framework of internships that could utilize labour of local young specialists, which may require deeper economic reforms. Thus as of now, due to different stages of economic development of various regions in the world, the issue of unpaid internships ranges from a socio-economic issue to non-existent practice, eclipsed by the lack of functioning industries and little presence of organizations and enterprises.

**Bloc Positions**

It has been universally expressed through the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) that emphasis should be placed on full employment and integration of all layers of society among the United Nations Member States\(^{xvi}\). However, depending on the stage of economic development that member states are currently in, they are suggesting differing policy recommendations to youth employment. While in OECD countries the issue is to protect highly-skilled graduates from being exploited without pay by corporations and organizations, LEDC’s are struggling with the very creation of such entities that
could create internships and job offers in the first place. Thus interests and priorities of the respective blocs will differ\textsuperscript{xvii}.

OECD countries including most of the EEA countries as well as Australia, Canada, the US and Nez Zealand have existing legal criteria to determine the legality of existing internships\textsuperscript{1}. Most often these criteria allow unpaid internships in cases when work experience is proven to be of benefit to individuals and increase human capital by providing vocational training in the relevant field. In some countries (such as Denmark, Germany, Switzerland and New Zealand) local governments often have fund schemes available to assist unpaid interns with their living expenses. Other countries such as France have set a legal minimum that all interns must be paid for any internships longer than 2 months. While this applies to private companies, internships at international organizations such as the UNEP, UNESCO and OECD in Paris are still unpaid\textsuperscript{xviii}. The US and Canada also have a set of legal requirement for internships. Thus the position of OECD countries is to have at least moderate level of regulation of internships in economies where internships have become a norm practice among tertiary education students. These countries should also bear in mind that excessive regulation of corporations could result in their relocation to countries with more flexible laws.

In the emerging economies such as the countries of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) the practice of internships has also become prevalent and proliferation of unpaid internships also creates similar challenges to students from lower socio-economic backgrounds\textsuperscript{xx}. Due to less regulation and higher competition for internship places, abuse of unpaid intern is also prevalent, whereby companies follow deliberate policies of taking advantage of free labour. Brazil has actually implemented legislature setting out the minimum wages for interns as well as basic insurance and guaranteed paid holidays once a year\textsuperscript{xx}. Many other emerging economies do not have any specific regulations of social protection of unpaid interns.
Finally, the LEDC’s may have youth unemployment well in excess of 50% and they require structural adjustment in their economy across a range of industries. Internships are scarce in such countries and do not appear to be an issue. Indeed, creation of functioning labour market is the very challenge that would have to be addressed in LEDC’s such as Central African Republic, Uganda or Mauritania before any clear stance on internships could be taken. These countries often have development projects such as UNDP, UNCTAD and GIZ that try to increase human capital in the least developed regions and spur economic growth and production.

Questions for Resolution

Delegates are invited to revisit Part 4 of this Study Guide to see the main points of contention and directions for the debate. The main questions that should be considered are: what principles of the United Nations and Public International Law are at stake when it comes to proliferation of unpaid internships? Considering customary legal practices of the international community as well as continuous actions of individual member states, how should unpaid internships be viewed and what, if any, policy responses should be undertaken to address them? Furthermore, there should be appreciation that solutions need to be devised that will be equally applicable to developed countries, emerging economies and LEDC’s. Alternatively, delegates could consider any potential effects on developing countries by structural changes in internship policies in developed countries.

Various conventions on rights of employees and trainees as well as any initiatives to promote fair access to employment should be considered within the prism of unpaid internships. In particular delegates need to weigh whether it is the prerogative of companies and organizations to set their conditions for interns, or whether individual states should engage in active regulation of internships and traineeships. In particular, interests of domestic actors and pledges made by the governments will need to be taken into account. Workable alternatives or
proposals will need to be devised that could effectively redress financial inequalities created by current practice. One could pose themselves a question: is paid internship a right guaranteed to all qualified graduates? Or is it simply a privilege accessible only to appropriate industries?

Lastly, the implications of regulating internships on global economic development should be weighted. As transnational corporations become ever more influential actors of public international law, their interests also need to be taken into account when proposing policy responses. What would be the effect on employment of young graduates be in case of prohibition of unpaid internships? Would fewer people have opportunity to gain work experience? Would vocational training programmes decrease in their size and become ever more selective, further exacerbating slow recovery from the financial crisis of the late 2000s? What alternative models could be develop to promote higher participation in global governance and ensure full employment of the qualified members of the global labour force?

Conclusion

Considering the recent economic downturn the agenda of achieving full employment of labour force, training in skills that are required by the industries as well as promotion of investment into human capital, the issue of proliferation of unpaid internships needs to be critically assessed within the framework of international law and current aspirations of the United Nations and its subsidiary branches. Voices of young graduates and interns themselves need to be heard to ensure that solution to this problem reflects the pressing issues faced by the affected groups of society. Furthermore, rights of young interns should be assessed and basic fulfillment of standards of working conditions and social protection needs to be assured in accordance with existing practices promoted by the International Labour Organisation and the UN Economic and Social Council.
Lastly, delegates should take a critical approach when formulating possible policy responses to prevent conflict of interests among various parties concerned as well as to reaffirm any existing treaties, conventions, pacts and covenants dealing with the rights of young employees when addressing the issue of proliferation of practice of unpaid internships.

**Suggestions for further research**

Some of these links were used to identify relevant problems; where parts of text were quoted, statistics used, or ideas borrowed directly, they are referenced in Part 9 (Bibliography); all other sources for further research are listed below:


V. Global Employment Trends for Youth Report, 2011 Update, Published by the ILO, raises the issues of employment pertaining to young employees. Full text can be downloaded by following this link: http://www.ilo.org/empelm/pubs/WCMS_165455/lang--en/index.htm

VI. Some statistics gathered by the National Association of Colleges and Employers with regarding work experiences of graduate interns: http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2013/06/do-unpaid-internships-lead-to-jobs-not-for-college-students/276959/

VII. United Nations World Youth Report has some case-studies worldwide on working conditions of young employees, challenges and barriers to development faced in different regions of the world: http://www.unworldyouthreport.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=1&Itemid=67

Furthermore, delegates are advised to consult national labour legislation of the countries they represent to see what, if any, regulations on internships are currently incorporated into existing national legislation. Statements made by the heads of state, ministers of education, employment or finance are to be presumed to reflect the position of the country towards the issue. Opinions voiced by various NGOs should be weighted critically to see if they reflect the interest of the state.

In addition to these sources delegates are invited to consult articles and reports cited in bibliography to see any relevant arguments for their position papers and to consider which of those arguments pertain to the national interests of the countries they represent.
Bibliography

See below for the list of sources whose words, statistics or ideas that were directly borrowed:

<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/economicgrowth.asp>


Prof Joseph Stiglitz and Prof Myron Scholes, Financial Crisis and Regulation Debate, the Economist, October 2013, http://www.economist.com/debate/overview/134


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The agenda for the 2014 conference is available online at www.limun.org.uk/agenda

Since its 14th session last year, LIMUN has introduced changes to its Rules of Procedure. The revised Rules can be accessed here: http://limun.org.uk/rules
POSITION PAPERS

What is a position paper?
A position paper is a statement of policy, which is intended to communicate an overall position of a country on a particular topic debated in the committee. Position papers should be brief and outline the general policies rather than specific measures.

Each delegate should submit one position paper per topic to be debated by the committee (note: most of the committees have two proposed topics). Each paper should be approximately one page per topic.

LIMUN offers a short guide on how to write a position paper. It is available on our website: http://limun.org.uk/FCKfiles/File/Position_Paper_Guide.pdf

Deadlines
There are two deadlines for submission of delegates’ position papers:

   **February 11th (Tuesday)** – position papers submitted before this deadline will be reviewed by the Directors and the delegates will receive feedback and will be given a chance to submit a corrected version of their policy papers (if necessary).

   **February 14th (Friday)** – position papers submitted before this deadline will still receive feedback from the Directors, but their re-submission will not be permitted.

Submitted position papers will be circulated by the Directors among the committee members. Please note: LIMUN 2014 Awards Policy revision has introduced a Best Position Paper award.
CONTACT DETAILS

For any enquiries relating to your committee proceedings or if you want to get in touch with your committee’s Directors, or for submission of position papers -

- please e-mail: ecosoc@limun.org.uk

Other enquiries regarding the Conference should be made to enquiries@limun.org.uk

Before contacting LIMUN please make sure you have read FAQ section on our website: http://limun.org.uk/faq