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SIMULATION HANDBOOK

ECOSOC PLENARY

ECOSOC Simulation Handbook

The Economic and Social Council, otherwise known as ECOSOC, is one of the six main Organs of the UN. It is the main body for coordinating and reviewing recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

The League of Nations was planning to expand its economic and social functions when war broke out in 1939. Unfortunately the League never got a chance to implement this plan. Nonetheless, many of the ideas that were discussed in the League were later included in the UN Charter.

To increase the impact of ECOSOC, the UN Charter was amended to increase the members in the Council from 18 to 54.

Like the General Assembly, ECOSOC can only make recommendations. It has no way of enforcing its decisions.

ECOSOC coordinates and provides guidance to a wide range of UN entities dedicated to sustainable development that include regional economic and social commissions, functional commissions (see list of subsidiary bodies in Annex) and specialized agencies, programmes and funds.

Reforms over the last decade, particularly General Assembly resolution 68/1, have strengthened ECOSOC's leading role on economic, social and environmental issues and achieving a balanced integration of these three pillars of sustainable development. ECOSOC is also charged with giving special attention to following up on major UN conferences and summits.

ECOSOC is responsible for:

- promoting higher standards of living, full employment, and economic and social progress;
- identifying solutions to international economic, social and health problems;
- facilitating international cultural and educational cooperation; and
- encouraging universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

ECOSOC oversees a complex ecosystem of **subsidiary bodies**, composed of regional commissions, functional commissions and expert bodies, standing committees and ad hoc bodies that are actively engaged in the work of the UN system on development.

In the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the decision to allocate an agenda item to the Plenary or one of its functional commissions depends on the nature, scope, and relevance of the issue, as well as the specific mandates of the respective bodies. This allocation process is guided by ECOSOC's rules of procedure and the priorities set by the UN system.

Agenda items of broad or cross-cutting significance, or those requiring high level political attention, are typically allocated to the Plenary. These include topics that intersect multiple domains of ECOSOC's work, such as reviewing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, coordinating humanitarian affairs, or addressing global emergencies. The Plenary is designed to provide a comprehensive platform for engaging member states, UN agencies, and other stakeholders in discussions that span diverse aspects of economic, social, and environmental policy.



ECOSOC Simulation Handbook (cont.)

The topic that is the focus of this simulation, “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,” is one of those broad agenda items and is therefore allocated to the ECOSOC Plenary for consideration.

In situations where urgent or emerging issues arise, such as global crises or pandemics, the Plenary is often tasked with addressing them. The platform allows for immediate dialogue and coordinated action by bringing together representatives from across the UN system and member states.

Furthermore, items that fall directly under ECOSOC’s mandate to oversee and guide broad economic and social policies are also discussed in the Plenary. These include topics such as financing for development, UN operational activities for development, and high-level political guidance on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Plenary plays a key role in high-level engagements, often serving as the forum for interactions involving senior officials, heads of state, and high-level representatives. Events such as the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the Humanitarian Affairs Segment, and the Youth Forum are typically hosted in the Plenary, emphasizing its function as the primary venue for global dialogue on pressing issues. Similarly, items such as the annual reports of UN agencies, funds, and programs are brought to the Plenary for review, ensuring coherence across the UN system and providing a platform for coordinating the work of ECOSOC’s functional commissions and subsidiary bodies.

The process of deciding which items are allocated to the Plenary begins with pre-sessional preparations. The Bureau of ECOSOC drafts a provisional agenda in consultation with member states, UN agencies, and subsidiary bodies. Following this, the Bureau engages in consultations with relevant stakeholders, including the chairs of functional commissions, to determine the most appropriate body for each agenda item. This decision-making process ensures that items are assigned in accordance with the specific mandates of the Plenary and the functional commissions. For instance, topics related to population and development are typically allocated to the Commission on Population and Development, while social development issues are assigned to the Commission on Social Development. In cases where the agenda item has a cross-cutting or overarching scope, it remains in the Plenary for broader discussion.

The coordination between the Plenary and functional commissions is crucial to maintaining coherence in ECOSOC’s work. While functional commissions delve into technical and specialized issues, the Plenary serves as the overarching platform to address high-level and cross-cutting matters, consolidating the outcomes of these commissions into the larger agenda.

The Plenary ensures that ECOSOC operates as a unified body capable of addressing complex global challenges effectively.

Main Elements of ECOSOC Plenary Meetings

The simulation of the ECOSOC Plenary is divided into three parts: 1) Opening Plenary, 2) Informal Consultations, and 3) Closing Plenary.

Main Elements of ECOSOC Plenary Meetings (cont.)

THE OPENING PLENARY

The simulation begins with an Opening Plenary which is a formal meeting where delegates will adopt their Organization of Work by consensus and engage in an interactive session with a UN expert on “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”. The Plenary is led by a President.

A. First formal meeting (run according to Rules of Procedure) to:

1. **Review and adopt the Organization of Work** which details how long delegates have to deliver their statements during the General Debate and how the time will be organized during the time delegates will be their Commissions. The presentation of the Organization of Work is the first order of business which must be adopted by consensus before the Plenary can begin its General Debate.
2. **Engage in an Interactive Session with a UN expert** to give delegates an opportunity to deepen their knowledge on the topic they will be debating. The Interactive Session will begin with a statement delivered by an expert followed by Q&A from the delegates.
3. **Convene the General Debate** where individual delegates speaking in their national capacity and/or on behalf of a political group will have an opportunity to make an opening statement on the topic that will be discussed. Any delegation or political group wishing to make a statement during the General Debate must subscribe to the Speakers List before the debate begins.

B. Informal consultations (where rules of procedure are suspended and where most of the time in the Commission is spent) to:

Delegates will spend most of their time in Informal consultations (where rules of procedure are suspended) to:

1. **Allow each regional group to draft a resolution.** This replaces the use of working papers which is followed in some Model UN conferences. Before delegates will be split into different regional groups, the Plenary as a whole must agree by consensus on a common structure for the operative section of the resolution.
2. **Merge the different drafts.** The regional groups must each choose a head delegate to lead the discussions on how to merge their different drafts into one resolution that is later reviewed paragraph by paragraph by the entire Commission. Each group can change the head delegate leading the negotiations on their behalf as often as they want.
3. **Submit the draft to the Bureau** along with a list of sponsors.
4. **Review the draft resolution** line by line to create a compilation text that contains a complete list of amendments proposed by delegations that chose not to sponsor the resolution. These amendments are neither friendly or unfriendly and are never voted on during informal consultations. Delegates will be given a choice at different points during the line by line to temporarily suspend the line by line review to debate the amendments that have been proposed so far or continue on. If the delegates decide to review the entire resolution without suspending the line by line at any point, then the debate of amendments would not begin until after the line by line review is completed.



Main Elements of ECOSOC Plenary Meetings (cont.)

B. Informal consultations (where rules of procedure are suspended and where most of the time in the Commission is spent) to (cont.):

5. **Debate the amendments** proposed by the non-sponsors during the line by line review. During this stage of the deliberations, sponsors and non-sponsors talk to each other with the goal of reaching consensus on the amendments that have been proposed. An amendment cannot be accepted if one or more delegates have an objection to including it in the text. When this happens, delegates can agree to an alternative version of the amendment if that will address the objection that has been raised or if there is strong objection to the amendment from other delegates, the delegate who proposed it can withdraw it, if they so choose. Every time the wording of an entire paragraph has been agreed to by the delegates it should be marked "Agreed ad ref" to indicate that the delegates have temporarily agreed to the text in that paragraph until the entire negotiation process has been completed.
6. During the debate, delegates can choose to have the Chair moderate the debate of amendments or to do it by themselves or have one of the sponsors moderate the negotiations. It is up to the delegates to decide.
7. If there is an amendment that the delegates cannot agree on during informal consultations, the amendment should be "bracketed" or set aside for further discussion later on so that the delegates can first focus on those amendments that are easier to reach agreement on.
8. After going through all the amendments at least once, the delegates should return to those amendments that have been "bracketed".
9. Facilitators can be appointed to help delegates reach agreement on these amendments.
10. After all the amendments have been debated and all paragraphs are marked 'agreed ad ref', the Chair should scroll through the entire resolution paragraph and paragraph and ask the delegates to carefully read the text to make sure there are no further objections.
11. **Repeat #5** if new objections are raised until agreement has been reached on all of the new amendments and every paragraph is marked "Agreed ad ref".
12. If consensus has been reached early and time still remains in the Commission, delegates can go back and add more text or even another sub-topic. If new text is added, it must be reviewed and any amendments that proposed to the new text must be debated in the manner set forth in this handbook.

CLOSING PLENARY

C. Formal meeting (run according to the rules of procedure) to:

1. **Formally Introduce the draft resolution** to the entire Commission. The sponsors must decide who will introduce the resolution to the Plenary on their behalf.
2. **Final Statements before adoption of the resolution:** Delegates are encouraged to make any final statement after the resolution is adopted but, nonetheless, have the right to do so either before or after the resolution is adopted.
3. **Adopt the draft** resolution by consensus (i.e., without voting).
4. **Final Statements after adoption of the resolution**
5. **Closing statement by the President of ECOSOC**



Things to Know about the Rules of Procedure

1. There are no moderated and unmoderated caucuses. That means that during the General Debate during the Opening Plenary, the speeches are never interrupted. The Speakers List is followed until all speakers have had an opportunity to speak.
2. Passing notes during Formal Meetings is not allowed.
3. The presiding officer during meetings will never ask, "Are any points or motions on the floor?"
4. Parliamentary points (e.g., Points of Personal Privilege, Points of Information, and Points of Inquiry) and motions (e.g., Motion for Moderated or Unmoderated Caucuses, Motion to Set Agenda, Motions to Set Speaking Time, Motion to Move to Voting Procedures, etc.) **are not allowed** during the conference. These are parliamentary rules of procedure and they are not used at the United Nations because it is not a Parliament.
5. Delegates will not be allowed to yield their time if they finish their statement early.
6. The only point that is allowed is a Point of Order, which is only to be used if a delegate feels the rules of procedure are not being following properly.
7. Delegates must raise a Points of Order without being prompted.
8. The Right of Reply is allowed during the General Debate if a delegation wishes to respond to a comment made during a speech that they find offensive. Any delegation wishing to exercise their right of reply must notify the secretary of their request. If granted by the President, they must wait until the end of the Speakers List to reply.
9. Signatories are not required in order for a resolution to be considered. When there are multiple versions of a draft resolution on an agenda item, the Committee will merge the drafts so that no more than one resolution is submitted to the Bureau for consideration.
10. During informal consultations, there will be no rules of procedure. Delegates are encouraged to work together to achieve consensus on the wording of the resolution that is under consideration.
11. The line by line review offers an opportunity for delegates to propose changes to the draft resolution.
12. Sponsors are not allowed to propose amendments during the line by line review. Sponsors can get together during informal consultations and decide to modify the text, however, all the sponsors must agree to any changes that are proposed. If one sponsor objects to a proposed change in the text, then the text should not be changed until all the sponsors agree to it.
13. During the line by line review delegates can indicate if they agree or disagree with the amendments that are proposed and ask the sponsors to clarify the meaning of the text. Delegates must wait until the line by line review has been suspended or completed before they can begin discussing any of the amendments in detail.
14. Delegates can make a statements during the Closing Plenary to put on record any reservations they may have on specific paragraphs in the resolution before or after the resolution is adopted.



Terms used in the simulation of the CPD

1. **Bureau:** refers to the President and Vice-President who are officials presiding over meetings.
2. **Facilitator (CCPCJ):** The Facilitator is responsible for presiding over the informal consultations and has the responsibility of helping the delegates reach consensus on the text of the draft resolution.
3. **Tabling a resolution:** refers to the act of submitting a resolution to the Bureau for consideration. This action does not require signatories.
4. **Paragraphs:** Model UN conferences around the world are used to referring to the clauses or sub-clauses of a resolution. At the United Nations, these are referred to as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.
5. **Informal consultations:** These are informal meeting that take place to allow groups of delegates to draft resolutions then merge them once they have been drafted before engaging in negotiations on amendments that have been proposed to modify the text before it is adopted. During an informal consultations there are no rules of procedure.
6. **Consensus:** Consensus occurs when all of the delegations in a Committee reach agreement on the wording of every paragraph in a draft resolution and are ready to adopt it without voting on it. This is the goal of the negotiation process.
7. **Statements before or after adoption of the resolution:** When consensus has been reached and a resolution is adopted without a vote, delegates are given the opportunity to make a statement about any reservations they may have about particular paragraphs that are included in the draft resolution. It is possible to agree to adopt a resolution without a vote and still have elements of a resolution that the non-sponsor is not entirely pleased with. Or it may be to express their disappointment that something important was left out of the resolution.

Terms not used in the simulation of the CPD

1. **Dais:** This term is not used at the UN and is therefore not a part of the terminology of the WIMUN approach. The proper term to use when referring to the officials presiding over a meeting is the Bureau.
2. **Honourable Delegates or Honourable Chair:** These terms are used in a Parliament and since the UN is not a Parliament it is not appropriate to use them during the simulation of UN meetings. When making a statement during the General Debate, delegates should address his/her comments to the person presiding over the meeting (e.g., Mr./Madame President during Plenary meetings) and not to the delegates.
3. **House:** In some conferences, the person presiding over a meeting might say, "Will the House come to order" if the delegates are making too much noise. Again, since the UN is not a Parliament, it is inappropriate to refer to ECOSCO as the "House" when addressing delegates.
4. **Director:** Most MUN conferences have a Director that oversees working papers and draft resolutions and acts as an expert on topics. The WIMUN approach does not have Directors. There is the Chair who presides over meetings and Secretariat staff or real UN experts who advise on topics being discussed in each Commission.
5. **Friendly and Unfriendly amendments:** These terms are not used at the UN and do not apply the negotiation process in the WIMUN approach which focuses on reaching consensus among all delegates.
6. **Moderated and Unmoderated Caucuses:** These terms do not exist at the UN. what does exist are Formal Informals and Informal Informals which are similar in some respects but differ in other respects (see definition above).
7. **Clauses:** Model UN conferences around the world refer to the clauses of a draft resolution. In contrast, the editorial guidelines at the UN refer to them as paragraphs and sub-paragraphs.



Drafting a Resolution

Every resolution is divided into two sections that consist of preambular and the operative paragraphs.

Preambular paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present participle (e.g., Recalling) and always ends with comma. Preambular paragraphs are not numbered.

Operative paragraphs begin with a word or phrase in the present tense (e.g., Encourages) and always end with a semi-colon except for the last operative paragraph that ends with a period.

The words or phrases used to begin a paragraph are always italicized and never underlined.

The preambular paragraphs set the stage and context for the operative section.

The best way to learn about how to write a good resolution is to study and compare them. Here are some tips about what goes into a good resolution.

TYPE AND ORDER OF CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN THE PREAMBLE WITH EXAMPLES FOR EACH

When reading this section, please keep in mind that the aim is to give you an idea of the range of content that could be included in a resolution and does not mean that this content is always included in a resolution. It also aims to serve as a guideline on how to decide the order in which to include content when drafting a resolution or merging content from different resolutions on the same agenda item.

1. The chapeau of an ECOSOC resolution adopted by the Plenary always begin with:
 - The Economic and Social Council
2. The preamble on this particular topic begins by reaffirming General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 because it provides the foundational framework for the UN's humanitarian assistance system. It also reaffirms important principles that this framework is based on.

Example

- **The Economic and Social Council,**
- **Reaffirming** General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, and recalling other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council,
- **Reaffirming** also the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the need for all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance in situations of complex emergencies, protracted crises and natural disasters to promote and fully respect those principles,

If the same verb (i.e., **Reaffirming**) is used twice in a row to begin a paragraph, the second time it is used, the word 'also' is added and italicized (e.g., **Reaffirming** also). If **Reaffirming** were used to begin a preambular three times in a row, the third it is used, the word 'further' is added and italicized (e.g., **Reaffirming** further).



Drafting a Resolution (cont.)

TYPE AND ORDER OF CONTENT TO INCLUDE IN THE PREAMBLE WITH EXAMPLES FOR EACH (CONT.)

3. Member States sometimes include paragraphs that recall important Declarations or Conventions that provide a foundation for the actions to be recommended in the operative paragraphs.

Example

- **Recalling** the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted at the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, held on 19 September 2016, ¹

4. If there are other important actions that the United Nations or Member States have has taken on this agenda item that would also be included in the preambular section:

Example

- **Welcoming** the convening of the intergovernmental conference held on 10 and 11 December 2018 in Marrakech, Morocco, and recalling that it adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, also known as the Marrakech Compact on Migration, ²

5. The preamble also highlights important elements associated with the topic that typically begin with the verbs such as **Noting, Recognizing, or Acknowledging**:

Example

- **Recognizing** that urgent and concerted action is needed at all levels to recover momentum and accelerate efforts to end famine, food insecurity and all forms of malnutrition, comprehensively tackling both their causes and effects, and to promote improved nutrition and sustainable and resilient agrifood systems,
- **Noting** the need for increased awareness of the international community regarding the issue of internal displacement worldwide, including the situation of millions living in protracted situations of displacement, and the urgency of providing adequate humanitarian assistance to and protection for internally displaced persons,
- **Recognizing** that inclusive economic growth and sustainable development are essential for the prevention of and preparedness for natural disasters and other emergencies,

6. The preambular paragraphs also include information about the concerns that are driving the debate of the agenda item that is under consideration.

Example

- **Noting** with great concern that millions of people are facing famine or the immediate risk of famine or experiencing crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse, and noting that armed conflicts, drought, poverty and volatility of commodity prices are among the factors causing or exacerbating famine, and acute food insecurity and malnutrition, and that additional efforts, including international support, are urgently needed to address this,

¹ General Assembly resolution 71/1

² General Assembly resolution 73/195, annex.



Drafting a Resolution (cont.)

CONTENT TO BE INCLUDED IN OPERATIVE PARAGRAPHS WITH EXAMPLES

1. If you want to draw attention to a Secretary-General report in the resolution, this is usually done in by making it the first operative paragraph:
 - a. **Takes note** of the report of the Secretary-General; 3
2. The operative paragraphs primarily consist of recommended actions that address the concerns outlined in the preamble. Since ECOSOC resolutions are only recommendations and there is no way to enforce them. As a result operative paragraphs typically begin with the verbs, **Encourages, Urges, Calls upon or Requests**.
 - a. Encourages the United Nations humanitarian system, humanitarian organizations and other relevant organizations, while strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, to continue to work in close coordination with national Governments, taking into account the primary role of the affected State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of such assistance within its territory;
 - b. Requests the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue to lead the efforts to strengthen the coordination, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability of humanitarian assistance through, inter alia, continued and enhanced dialogue with Member States;
 - c. Calls upon Member States to continue to increase support to the Central Emergency Response Fund and humanitarian country-based and regional pooled funds for strengthening early and rapid response to mitigate the impact of disasters, including in underfunded contexts and increasingly through local and national responders and implementing partners;
 - d. Urges United Nations agencies and international organizations, in their humanitarian assistance efforts, to continue to improve the humanitarian programme cycle, including the development and more consistent use of coordinated and comprehensive needs assessment tools;
 - e. Also urges Member States to scale up efforts to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel, their facilities, equipment, transports and supplies;

Please note that when a verb is repeated more than once in the operative section, the second time the verb is used, "also" appears before the verb (e.g., Also urges) and the third time it appears "further" appears before the verb (e.g., Further urges).

A list of terms commonly used terms in resolutions will be posted on the WIMUN NY 2025 website along with the Study Guide and Annotated Bibliography for each simulation.

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3. A/78/73-E/2023/61.

