



Reducing Economic Disparity in Developing Countries:

United Nations Economic and Social Council

General Assembly

Introduction

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the original six principal organs of the United Nations, concerning itself with the economic and social facets of world issues and development. It currently consists of a rotating committee of 54 countries divided into five regional groups, with members elected for two-year terms. The five groups are: African States, Asia Pacific States, Eastern European States, Latin American and Caribbean States, and Western European and Other States. The body also governs a variety of global and regional commissions, as well as influencing many powerful specialized agencies. ECOSOC functions as a collective meeting point for dialogue and policy strategy on a global level and a gateway for UN participation. It has the mandate “to coordinate the economic, social, and cultural activities of the United Nations and promote international cooperation and development” by carrying out the principles of the UN Charter, i.e., multilateralism, inclusivity, and global solidarity.

ECOSOC’s goals mainly revolve around the "Sustainable Development Goals” adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015. By leveraging different levels of organization, forums, and leadership in partnership with its subsidiary organs and commissions, ECOSOC helps to advance humanity safely and successfully.

ECOSOC is not limited to the formulation of planning or the organization of development. It also conducts the financing of sustainable development during its

annual Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up. It leverages the funding and power of various specialized organizations within the UN, such as the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization and many others, to help organize the meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals through international cooperation and funding.

COMMISSIONS AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY ORGANS			
Functional Commissions • Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice • Narcotic Drugs • Population and Development • Science and Technology for Development • Social Development • Statistics • Status of Women • United Nations Forum on Forests	Regional Commissions⁶ ECA Economic Commission for Africa ECE Economic Commission for Europe ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ESCWA Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Other Bodies⁸ • Committee for Development Policy • Committee of Experts on Public Administration • Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations • Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS UNGEI United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names UNGGIM Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management	Research and Training UNICRI United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Topic: Addressing Economic Disparities in Post-Colonial States

The economic status quo of today and its strong exploitative nature did not emerge overnight at the behest of global capitalism. Around the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, the powers of old-world Europe sought to expand beyond the continent's existing economic, political, and scientific reach. Tales of foreign lands, riches, and the thirst for discovery drove the mercantile and emerging industrial classes to engage in exploitative economies, either at the behest of their own interests or of the state itself.

The horrors, human cost, and lasting historical impact of colonialism cannot be overstated; nor can the truly unique experiences of the peoples, cultures, and states that colonialists ruled over. Despite most colonial relations being entirely extractive both in a resource-based and a human sense, it is impossible to fully address the concerns and needs of each country through the development of a single policy. Social and economic conditions vary from country to country and from region to region, as does the ability of ECOSOC and its partners to affect the conditions of each nation. The legacy of colonialist exploitation and its cost in lives and the development of many countries persists to this day. Now in most cases, instead of brutal takeovers and foreign-sponsored military rule, countries are enslaved by debt from the cost of development. Many nations suffer from a combination of the “resource curse,” combined with weak institutions and the legacies of colonial social fragmentation. This reduces their ability to sustainably develop, or in some cases even causes states to fail and fracture.

There have been many attempts and initiatives to address this problem, such as the UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development), or Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Each has its own unique approach to the issues facing nations in this globalized world. However, the shifting dynamic of today's world from a Western-focused world order to a more regionalized one has provided space for new developments in the global South and other post-colonial states.

Now with the emergence of BRICS, the African Union, and other multinational regional alliances, developing nations can succeed without the burdens of debt that they were saddled with in the past. It is ECOSOC's mandate to guide the development and the reduction of economic disparities of post-colonial states.

Questions to consider

- How might ECOSOC address the issues of neo-colonialism that are present in post-colonial economies through planning, the organization of development, or its financing policies?
- What resources could be leveraged to address the history of colonialism and its social and economic consequences?
- What regional issues might stand in the way of sustainable development?
- How might the modern costs associated with economic development be alleviated for post-colonial states that lack necessary funding?

Sources

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- https://bpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/voices.uchicago.edu/dist/f/1135/files/2018/06/economics_of_colonialism_published-1xlqe05.pdf
- <https://economistsforromney.com/post-colonial-perspectives-in-political-economic-theory/>
- <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/about-us>

Recommended Resources

- <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2025>
- <https://www.uneca.org/about>
- <https://data360.worldbank.org/en/analytics/global-reports>
- <https://www.g77.org/>