



**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

CHANGE THE WORLD

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# EMIRATES 2025

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

**GA – ECOFIN**

CHANGE  
THE  
WORLD  
ACADEMY

POWERED  
BY



**Diplomatici**

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025 Change the World Model United Nations (CWMUN).

As your committee Dais, we are looking forward to meet you and to hear your ideas about how to solve international problems.

The United Nations (UN) depends on the cooperation and goodwill of its 193 Member States. Because each State has unique interests and concerns, it is challenging to write, negotiate and pass resolutions. Every stage of the process demands creativity and diplomacy.

You will be discussing this topic:

**The impact of climate mitigation policies on economic sovereignty and social rights in developing nations**

While we may all lead different lives and face different struggles, we have to bear in mind that we all share the same world and the same resources. Whether it is environmental problems or political unrest, what is happening in the world concerns all of us. Only through mutual understanding, unity, and collaboration we can lay the foundations of a worthier world.

As your committee Dais, we will work to keep the committees running smoothly. We will do our best to help you understand the procedures and to ensure that the perspectives of all delegates are heard and respected.

Sincerely,

The CWMUN



### **What is this activity about?**

The Change the World Model United Nations is a role-playing game. Your task is to impersonate a diplomat of the assigned Country and present the perspective of this Country's current government.

### **What should you do now?**

Before the Simulation, you should write down and bring with you:

- **Handbook**, a collection of relevant UN resolutions, reports, academic studies, and news from reliable media.
- Write the **Position Paper**, describing the position of your country on the topic you have been assigned to.
- Some topics for **Moderated Caucus debates**, i.e. for short formal debates which should cover narrow aspects of each topic. *For example*, within the topic "Violence against women"; delegates can hold a caucus with the subtopic "Ways of preventing genital mutilation".
- **Ideas for the Resolution**, *id est*, at least two or three paragraphs that your State would like to include in the preamble and/or in the main body of the Resolution.
- You should also learn the **Rules of procedure**.

## *What will you do during the Simulation?*

In the Moderated Caucus you will hold short formal debates on details of each topic. Delegates will present the policy and solutions of the represented States in very short (usually one minute) speeches. In the Unmoderated Caucus, you will informally engage with other Delegates to agree on your policies and solutions and to write draft resolutions together as a Coalition. Working Papers will be checked and possibly edited by Chair and Director to conform to all formal requirements and be described as Draft Resolutions. Eventually, Coalitions will present their Draft Resolutions to the whole Committee. Other Delegates will debate and then vote for or against. The scope for the Committee as a whole is to produce one or more Resolutions.

## *What is a Resolution?*

A Resolution is a very specific document, built of Preambulatory and Operative clauses, expressing the will of a particular UN Committee agreed upon by its Member States. Resolutions are central to the UN and thus CWMUN gives all participants the opportunity to understand the process of creating them. Please seize this opportunity and prepare in advance at least one or two paragraphs per each topic! Sample resolution: [Resolution 2349 \(2017\)](#)<sup>1</sup>

## *Tips (!)*

Learn about your Country from the [CIA World Factbook](#)<sup>2</sup>, from the official website of your State's permanent mission to the United Nations, and from other government websites (for example the website and social media profiles of the Royal Family or President, Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs...). Make sure to know as much as possible about the foreign relations of your Country! Consider that at the United Nations, Countries generally lean towards their own geopolitical blocks: Western, Former Soviet, African, Middle Eastern, Asian, Latin American... Consider also organisations such as the European Union (EU), African Union, Arab League, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), The Union of South American Nations (USAN)...

<sup>1</sup> UN General Assembly, 2017 ([https://undocs.org/S/RES/2349\(2017\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2349(2017)))

<sup>2</sup> CIA, 2022 (<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>)

### **REMEMBER!**

Your task is to present the official position of your assigned Country. Misrepresenting this position and/or representing your private views is against the rules, even if you do not agree with your Country's position. In any case, you must not hyperbolize nor satirise the position of your Country. Humour, and especially sarcasm, is generally not typical for formal writing nor formal debates. Although MUN welcomes wit and smart puns, please always be extremely considerate when using humour.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### *1. Establishment of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY:*

The General Assembly was established in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations<sup>3</sup> and it occupies a central position as the chief deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations. It is composed of all 193 Member States of the United Nations, and it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion on the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter. It also plays a central role in the process of standard-setting and the codification of international law.

The Assembly regularly meets from September to December each year (main part), and thereafter, from January to September (resumed part), as required, including to take up outstanding reports from the Fourth and Fifth Committees. During the resumed part of the session, the Assembly also considers current issues in high-level thematic debates organised by the President of the General Assembly. During that period, the Assembly traditionally also conducts informal consultations on a wide range of substantive topics towards the adoption of new resolutions<sup>4</sup>.

As hinted before, the UN GA has six Standing Committees, that all discuss on specific topics:

- I. Disarmament and Security
- II. Economic and Financial
- III. Social, Humanitarian and Cultural
- IV. Special Political and Decolonization
- V. Administrative and Budgetary
- VI. Legal

Moreover, the GA can create new ad hoc committees to discuss on important matters in the geopolitical scenario

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<sup>3</sup> [UN Charter | United Nations](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Functions and powers of the General Assembly](#)

In addition to its regular sessions, the Assembly may meet in special and emergency special sessions<sup>5</sup>. To date, the Assembly has convened 32 special sessions and 11 emergency special sessions.

Each of the 193 Member States in the Assembly has one vote. Votes taken on designated important issues – such as recommendations on peace and security, the election of Security Council and Economic and Social Council members, and budgetary questions – require a two-thirds majority of Member States, but other questions are decided by a simple majority. That said, following informal consultations among Member States during which proposals are negotiated, the majority of resolutions are adopted without a vote (i.e., by consensus).

## ***2. Functions and objectives of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY:***

The Assembly makes recommendations to States on international issues within its competence. It has also taken actions across all pillars of the United Nations, including concerning political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal matters. In September 2015, the Assembly agreed on a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, contained in the outcome document of the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda (resolution 70/1 entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”). In 2022, the Assembly held a series of meetings to discuss the recommendations put forward by the Secretary-General in his report entitled “Our Common Agenda”<sup>6</sup>, an agenda of action, designed to strengthen and accelerate multilateral agreements – particularly the 2030 Agenda – and make a tangible difference in people’s lives<sup>7</sup>.

According to the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly may:

- Consider and approve the United Nations budget and establish the financial assessments of Member States.
- Elect the non-permanent members of the Security Council and the members of other United Nations councils and organs and, on the recommendation of the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General
- Consider and make recommendations on the general principles of cooperation for maintaining international peace and security, including disarmament

<sup>5</sup> [UN General Assembly - Special Sessions](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Our Common Agenda | United Nations](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Letter from the President of the General Assembly – Final OCA Summary | General Assembly of the United Nations](#)

- Discuss any question relating to international peace and security and, except where a dispute or situation is currently being discussed by the Security Council, make recommendations on it
- Discuss, with the same exception, and make recommendations on any questions within the scope of the Charter or affecting the powers and functions of any organ of the United Nations
- Initiate studies and make recommendations to promote international political cooperation, the development and codification of international law, the realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and international collaboration in the economic, social, humanitarian, cultural, educational and health fields
- Make recommendations for the peaceful settlement of any situation that might impair friendly relations among countries
- Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations organs

The Assembly may also take action in cases of a threat to the peace, breach of peace or act of aggression, when the Security Council has failed to act owing to the negative vote of a permanent member.

In such instances, according to its “Uniting for Peace” resolution of 3rd November 1950<sup>8</sup>, the Assembly may consider the matter immediately and recommend to its Members collective measures to maintain or restore international peace and security.

### ***3. Important actions or projects in the past:***

The General Assembly has been passing several resolutions since its foundation in 1946. To pass, GA resolutions need to be voted by a simple majority (e.g. 50 percent of all votes plus one). Some of the most remarkable are:

- Resolution 1 (1946): Established the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission (UNAEC)<sup>9</sup> "to deal with the problems raised by the discovery of atomic energy" and tasked to "make specific proposals... for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction", among other issues regarding nuclear technology<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> [NR005975.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Atomic Energy | United Nations](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Resolution 1 \(1946\) / \(un.org\)](#)

- Resolution 96 (1946): issuing the crime of Genocide<sup>11</sup>
- Resolution 100 (1946): establishing the Headquarters of the UN
- Resolution 177 (1947): The International Law Commission was directed to "formulate the principles of international law recognized in the Charter of the Nuremberg Tribunal and in the judgment of the Tribunal". This resulted in the creation of the Nuremberg Principles<sup>12</sup>.
- Resolution 181 (1947): 'Partition resolution' regarding the British Mandate of Palestine<sup>13</sup>.
- Resolution 194 (1947): issuing the "Right of return" of Palestinian refugees<sup>14</sup>.
- Resolution 217 (1947): Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>15</sup>.
- Resolution 498 (1951): calling on the People's Republic of China to cease all hostilities on the Korean peninsula... its armed forces continue their invasion of Korea and their large-scale attacks upon United Nations forces there...has itself engaged in aggression in Korea<sup>16</sup>.
- Resolution 1761 (1962): Recommended sanctions against South Africa in response to the government's policy of apartheid<sup>17</sup>.
- Resolution 1962 (1963): One of the earliest resolutions governing Outer space<sup>18</sup>.
- Resolution 3010 (1972): Adopted to make the year 1975 International Women's Year<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> [The Crime of Genocide. \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Affirmation of the Principles of International Law recognized by the Charter of the Nürnberg Tribunal General Assembly resolution 95 \(I\)](#)

<sup>13</sup> [NR003888.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Resolution 194 | UNRWA](#)

<sup>15</sup> [A/RES/3/217 A - Universal Declaration of Human Rights - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements \(un-documents.net\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Uniting for Peace General Assembly resolution 377 \(V\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [The policies of apartheid of the Government of the Republic of South Africa. \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>18</sup> [RES 1962 \(XVIII\) \(unoosa.org\)](#)

<sup>19</sup> [A/RES/27/3010 - International Women's Year - UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements \(un-documents.net\)](#)

- Resolution 34/37 (1979): Deplored Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara and urged to terminate it<sup>20</sup>.
- Resolution 47/121 (1993): condemned ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian Muslims by the Bosnian Serbs as genocide, (fourteen years later the International Court of Justice ruled in the Bosnian Genocide Case of 2007, that ethnic cleansing was not enough in itself to be genocide, but that there must also be intent to kill a substantial part of the targeted group by the perpetrators)<sup>21</sup>.
- Resolution 60/7 (2005): designated the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.
- Resolution 62/149 (2007): called for a universal moratorium on capital punishment to total abolition, and in the meantime, respect for the rights of those on death row. Calls on states which have abolished the death penalty not to reintroduce it.
- Resolution 67/19 (2012): recognizing the State of Palestine as a non-member observer State.
- Resolution 68/262 (2014): territorial integrity of Ukraine
- Resolution ES-11/1 (2022): Aggression against Ukraine<sup>22</sup>.
- Resolution ES-11/2 (2022): Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine<sup>23</sup>.
- Resolution ES-11/3 (2022): Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council<sup>24</sup>.
- Resolution ES-11/4 (2022): Territorial integrity of Ukraine: defending the principles of the Charter of the United Nations<sup>25</sup>.

#### **4. Challenges and important future projects:**

There has been a sustained effort to make the work of the General Assembly more focused and relevant. This was first identified as a priority during the 58th session, and efforts continued at subsequent sessions to streamline the agenda, improve the practices and working methods of the Main Committees, enhance the role of the

<sup>20</sup> [A/RES/34/37 : UN Documents : Security Council Report](#)

<sup>21</sup> [The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina : \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>22</sup> [N2229336.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>23</sup> [A/RES/ES-11/2 : UN Documents : Security Council Report](#)

<sup>24</sup> [N2231247.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [N22263066.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

General Committee, strengthen the role and authority of the President and examine the Assembly's role in the process of selecting the Secretary-General.

During recent sessions, the Assembly adopted landmark resolutions on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly (A/RES/70/305<sup>26</sup>, A/RES/71/323, A/RES/72/313<sup>27</sup>, A/RES/73/341<sup>28</sup>, A/RES/74/303<sup>29</sup> and A/RES/75/325<sup>30</sup>), which, amongst other, established an oath of office and a code of ethics for the Presidents of the General Assembly and provided for informal interactive dialogues with candidates for the position of President of the General Assembly.

The practice of convening high-level thematic debates is also a direct outcome of the revitalization process<sup>31</sup>. It has become an established practice for the Secretary-General to brief Member States periodically, in informal meetings of the General Assembly, on his recent activities and travels. These briefings have provided a well-received opportunity for exchange between the Secretary-General and Member States.

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<sup>26</sup> [ts \(F\) \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>27</sup> [N1828962.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>28</sup> [N1927990.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>29</sup> [N2023117.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>30</sup> [N2125062.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

<sup>31</sup> [Revitalization of the General Assembly of the United Nations](#)

## Second Committee

### *(Economic and Financial Committee - ECOFIN)*

#### 1. *Establishment of the Second Committee*

The United Nations General Assembly Second Committee (also known as the Economic and Financial Committee or ECOFIN or C2) is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly established in 1945 and deals with economical and financial matters. It meets up every year in early October until the end of November

#### 2. *Functions and objectives of the Second Committee*

Over the decades ECOFIN has become one of the main GA committees, responsible for global economic and financial affairs- covering macroeconomic policy, development financing, poverty, globalization, food security, sustainable development. The Committee normally begins its work in early October and aims to conclude in the last week of November. After a general beginning of the Committee's work the individual items are debated during the first four weeks of the session. The key functions and objectives of the ECOFIN are:

- Economic growth and development: the committee addresses macroeconomic policy questions, financing for development
- Eradicating poverty
- Analyzing the globalization effects
- Sustainable development, integrating economic social and environmental considerations

The second committee plays a crucial role in shaping the UN agenda and actions related to the economic and financial development

#### 3. *Important actions or projects in the past:*

Since the beginning ECOFIN has been collaborating in furnishing reports to the GA for the implementation of resolutions regarding specific financial problems, such as Financial Development of Under-Developed Countries in 1950, when GA adopted resolution A/RES/1541 based on the report of the second committee A/1524<sup>32</sup> as

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<sup>32</sup>Financing of Economic Development of Under-Developed Countries. Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly at Its 312th Plenary Meeting on 20 November 1950. (Adopted on the Report of the

well as further developments throughout all the 1900s such as the integrated approach to financing for development .During its 72nd session in 2017 the GA adopted 41 resolutions drafted by ECOFIN covering different fields such as financing for development follow-up and external debt<sup>33</sup>. Recently, in 2024 ECOFIN made 39 resolutions and 2 decisions on trade, climate, small-island states, Palestinian resources and tax reform. Furthermore the Committee put as a basis a crucial report in launching the Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio+20).In the GA 79 session, the Committee adopted a resolution promoting the social and solidarity economy (SSE) as a tool for achieving the SDGs. Another recent GA2 resolution reaffirmed the importance of South–South cooperation in economic development, underscoring peer support among developing countries

#### 4. Challenges and important future projects:

The committee has proposed declaring 2025 as the international Year of Glacier’s Preservation within March 21 to be observed annually beginning in 2025.<sup>34</sup> Also a UN trust fund will support awareness-raising and capacity-building and cooperation on accelerating melting of glaciers and the socioeconomic consequences<sup>35</sup>.

ECOFIN main challenges will be focused on achieving sustainable development and global economic cooperation, including addressing more pressing issues like financial stability and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The current global financial system is unable to deliver sustainable financing<sup>36</sup>ECOFIN has the long term objective to reduce the difficulties for developing countries to overcome the barriers in accessing long-term concessional funding as well as reducing the debt pressures present in many states where there is a disproportionate share of GDP on debt servicing, infrastructure investments and responses to crises . There is a substantial global financing gap that is slowing the

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*Second Committee (A/1524)*. (1950, November 21). United Nations Digital Library System; UN,. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/862814?v=pdf&ln=ar>

<sup>33</sup> anamaria. (2017, December 22). *UNGA Adopts Resolutions on Second Committee Items, Peace and Security Restructuring*. SDG Knowledge Hub. <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/unga-adopts-resolutions-on-second-committee-items-peace-and-security-restructuring/>

<sup>34</sup> *2025 International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation | International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation*. (2025). Un-Glaciers.org. <https://www.un-glaciers.org/en>

<sup>35</sup>Second Committee Approves 14 Resolutions, Including Text Calling Upon States to Strengthen Cooperation in Combating Illicit Financial Flows | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. (2022, November 21). Un.org. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/gaef3577.doc.html>

<sup>36</sup> *Speakers Call for New Innovative Methods of International Tax Cooperation, Reform of Inequitable Global Financial System, as Second Committee Takes Up Reports | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*. (2023, October 5). Un.org. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaef3586.doc.htm>

implementation of the SDGs as in they cannot be fully accomplished in their critical sectors such as climate, food security and poverty reduction, therefore there is an urgent call for drastic structural reforms of international financial architecture <sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Sustainable Development Goals Unreachable without Reformed Financial Architecture, Stronger Political Will, Speakers Say as Second Committee Opens General Debate* | UN Press. (n.d.). Press.un.org. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/gaef3583.doc.htm>

# The impact of climate mitigation policies on economic sovereignty and social rights in developing nations

## 1. Introduction on the topic

The global imperative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has led to the proliferation of climate mitigation policies across both developed and developing economies. These measures, ranging from carbon pricing and renewable energy transitions to land use regulations and industrial decarbonization, are essential for meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. However, their implementation often intersects uneasily with issues of economic sovereignty and social equity, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. As these nations work to comply with international climate frameworks, they face the dual challenge of mitigating emissions while preserving their developmental priorities, national autonomy over policy choices, and the social rights of vulnerable populations.

Many climate mitigation strategies, though environmentally necessary, carry hidden socio-economic costs. For example, the imposition of carbon taxes or the removal of fossil fuel subsidies, often recommended by multilateral institutions, may constrain national policy space, especially in heavily indebted economies. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, while supporting climate-resilient development<sup>38</sup>, have been critiqued for promoting green conditionalities that limit the policy autonomy of states<sup>39</sup>. Moreover, the Global South disproportionately bears the economic burden of adaptation and mitigation, despite contributing minimally to historic emissions. This asymmetry exacerbates structural inequalities in the international system and raises urgent questions about climate justice, development finance, and the legitimacy of global climate governance mechanisms. At the same time, the implementation of mitigation measures could have an impact on social rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)<sup>40</sup>, including the right to work, housing, and adequate standard of living. Coal-fired power plant closure without a framework for

<sup>38</sup> International Monetary Fund. (2023). Climate change and the IMF. IMF. <https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/climate-change>

<sup>39</sup> Kentikelenis, A., Stubbs, T., & Reinsberg, B. (2022). The IMF and the road to a green and inclusive recovery after Covid-19 (CBR Special Report). Cambridge Centre for Business Research. <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.86038>

<sup>40</sup> United Nations. (1966). International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>

just transition, land-use change for carbon offset projects, or the marketization of nature for carbon trade programs could involve the forced eviction of people, layoffs, and decreased access to basic services. International cooperation has recognized the necessity of achieving a "just transition," but its implementation is uneven and underfunded, especially for vulnerable economies that have limited institutional capacity<sup>41</sup>.

In this context, ECOFIN is uniquely positioned to examine the economic dimensions of climate governance, with a specific focus on developing nations. Delegates must grapple with complex trade-offs between fiscal sovereignty, international commitments, and social equity. How can climate mitigation be pursued in ways that do not replicate colonial patterns of extraction or impose new forms of external control? What frameworks can ensure that developing countries retain ownership of their economic trajectories while engaging meaningfully with the climate agenda? And what role can international financial architecture play in enabling a rights-based and economically just transition?

## **2. Sustainable Development vs. Green Protectionism**

Whereas the wider international community has agreed predominantly on the normative imperative of sustainable development, operationalizing climate goals within the context of international regimes of trade has brought an added dimension of asymmetry to North–South economic relations. As high-income economies have increasingly sought to implement trade measures directly linked to environmental performance, ranging from carbon border adjustment measures and supply chain due diligence acts to requirements for deforestation-free products, these measures have overwhelmingly had an operational impact of de facto non-tariff trade measures for developing economies, adversely affecting their diversification of industry, export potential, and independent regulatory agenda-setting power.

One classic example is the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), flagship of the European Green Deal. CBAM imposes a carbon price on imported high-emissions products such as cement, iron and steel, aluminum, fertilizers, and electricity, set to attempt to prevent "carbon leakage", the relocation of polluting industries to other countries that have weaker environmental standards. While the measure is intended to level the regulatory playing field within the EU, its operational effect could have the ironic effect of taxing disproportionately exporting countries that lack either the resources or the capacity needed to green their industries at similar speeds<sup>42</sup>. For most of the Least Developed

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<sup>41</sup> International Labour Organization. (2022). Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_432859.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> European Commission. (2023). Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) starts to apply in its transitional phase.

Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), that would mean forgoing preferential access to the European market, reinforcing structural dependency, and limiting options for value-added industrial development.

Fears of “green protectionism” are not unfounded. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) warned that the growth of climate-related trade restrictions would increase inequality worldwide, without sustained transfers of finance and technology to the Global South<sup>43</sup>. Over 60 governments signed a communiqué under the Coalition of Trade Ministers on Climate in 2022, agreeing on the need for inclusionary climate-compatible rules of trade. Nevertheless, the same year also saw an uptick in unilateral climate-based trade measures, including the United States’ Inflation Reduction Act, offering domestic advantages for green production that could breach World Trade Organization (WTO) rules of non-discrimination<sup>44</sup>. Such outcomes signal an emerging tension between the multilateral approach and the growing “eco-nationalism” of industrial countries.

At stake is the agreed commitment to “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (CBDR-RC), enshrined into the UNFCCC and reaffirmed by the Paris Agreement. Climate-related trade measures, if not designed under open-ended consultation and due supporting measures, can potentially undermine this basic commitment. They might force developing countries into adherence to externally set environmental standards that are mismatched with national development ambitions, institutional preparedness, and societal imperatives. As is brought out through recent pronouncements of African Union policy, environment conditionality of trade that does not consider historical emissions or uneven development trajectories translates into a new regulatory imperialism that can limit sovereign control of national development trajectories<sup>45</sup>. Thus, even as climate mitigation by trade is, of course, imperative, it needs to be achieved under equitable arrangements that are not a re-run of history’s template of economic subordination. For that purpose, ECOFIN can explore arrangements for making green trade policy compatible with the values of international development cooperation, the equitable provisions of the WTO, and the Sustainable Development

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/cs/ip\\_23\\_4685/IP\\_23\\_4685\\_EN.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/document/print/cs/ip_23_4685/IP_23_4685_EN.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2021). Trade and Development Report 2021: From recovery to resilience – The development dimension. UNCTAD.

[https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdr2021\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/tdr2021_en.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Climate Strategies (2023). Bridging the Divide: Trade and Climate Change - Challenges and Opportunities. Climate Strategies.

<https://climatestrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Climate-Strategies-Report--Bridging-the-Divide.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> African Union. (2022). African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want – First Ten-Year Implementation Plan 2014-2023 and Draft Second Ten-Year Implementation Plan 2024-2033. African Union Commission. <https://au.int/en/documents/20220101/agenda-2063-first-ten-year-implementation-plan-2014-2023>

Goals (SDGs), SDG 9 (industry, innovation, and infrastructure) and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) being the first among equals. This would entail capacity-building for emission reporting, financing green industrialization, and incorporating development exemption or transition periods as an element of global trade regimes. Without all of these safeguards, achievement of climate objectives could, paradoxically, itself negate the very developmental and social objectives they seek to attain.

### 3. *Decentralized Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Democracy*

The shift towards renewable energy has become a key cornerstone of global climate change mitigation plans, but their design and implementation differ radically across settings. In much of the low-income and rural Global South, centralized energy infrastructures, frequently inherited from colonial patterns or framed by post-independence development paradigms, continue to be lacking, exclusionary, or simply non-existent. More than 700 million individuals globally continue to lack access to electricity, and most live in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia<sup>46</sup>. In this context, decentralized renewable energy systems (DRES), including mini-grids, solar home systems, and community-owned wind or hydro initiatives, have gained traction as hopeful tools for both environmental sustainability and socio-economic inclusion.

In contrast to large-scale, grid-connected renewables frequently dominated by foreign investors or national utilities, DRES provide the opportunity for localized management of energy production, distribution, and cost. Such a transition, frequently dubbed energy democracy, is consonant with wider development objectives in that it empowers local stakeholders, especially cooperatives, municipalities, and civil society groups, to determine their own energy futures. Empirical research in Bangladesh, Kenya, and Nepal demonstrates that decentralized solar and micro-hydro installations not only mitigate emissions but also enhance health, increase educational opportunities, and provide livelihood support for small-scale entrepreneurship<sup>47</sup>. In fragile or conflict-affected regions, where national grid extension is impossible, community-driven renewable initiatives can provide both resilience and self-reliance. Yet, this decentralized shift is not without its hurdles. Limited public funding, institutional backing, and technical capacity regularly constrains the scalability of local renewable solutions. International energy programs, the African Development Bank's Desert to Power initiative or the International Solar Alliance, for example, have recognized the strategic value of decentralization, yet funding still privileges large-scale, export-oriented initiatives. Further, prevailing climate finance institutions, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), have been faulted for excessively complicated

<sup>46</sup> International Energy Agency. (2023). World Energy Outlook 2023. <https://www.iea.org/reports/world-energy-outlook-2023>

<sup>47</sup> Bhattacharyya, S. C. (2015). Mini-grid based electrification in Bangladesh: Technical configuration and business analysis. *Renewable Energy*, 75, 745-761. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.renene.2014.10.034>

application procedures that exclude community actors and indigenous governance arrangements<sup>48</sup>. In the absence of explicit guarantees and local involvement, the renewable transition threatens to entrench prevailing inequalities instead of redressing them.

For developing nations, the issue is not simply how to roll out renewables, but who owns, profits from, and manages them. A rights-based strategy to energy transition—rooted in the concept of energy as a public good, can help guarantee that electrification initiatives aid not merely decarbonization, but also poverty alleviation, gender equality, and rural development. ECOFIN, under its economic and financial portfolio, can examine encouraging measures such as concessional financing for decentralized systems, capacity-building programs for local energy cooperatives, and inclusive regulatory structures that eliminate entry barriers for non-state actors. By actively promoting energy democracy, renewable energy can become not just an instrument of environmental policy, but a foundation of equitable and sustainable development.

#### **4. Initiatives, projects and actions made by the GA ECOFIN**

Although the General Assembly Second Committee (ECOFIN) does not directly implement infrastructure projects, it plays a pivotal role in shaping global economic frameworks, mobilizing development finance, and fostering international consensus around energy access and sustainability. Over the last two decades, ECOFIN has consistently underscored the centrality of renewable energy to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in relation to Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Within this framework, the committee has actively supported decentralized renewable energy systems as a means to bridge the global energy divide.

An important landmark in this regard is Resolution A/RES/76/204<sup>49</sup> on "Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all", passed in December 2021. The resolution acknowledged the significance of decentralized and off-grid renewable energy solutions, particularly for rural and remote communities. It urged greater support for community-owned renewable infrastructure, technology transfer, and capacity-building for greater ownership and governance over energy resources at the local level. Notably, it urged Member States and development institutions to prioritize public financing instruments and innovative partnerships with civil society and cooperatives in their energy policies. In tandem, ECOFIN has

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<sup>48</sup> Heubaum, H., & Biermann, F. (2015). Integrating global energy and climate governance: The changing role of the International Energy Agency. *Energy Policy*, 87, 229–239.  
[https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/122388741/L\\_G\\_Hermwille\\_-\\_thesis.pdf](https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/122388741/L_G_Hermwille_-_thesis.pdf)

<sup>49</sup> United Nations General Assembly. (2021). Strengthening the protection of and provision of assistance to internally displaced persons (Resolution A/RES/76/204).  
<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/204>

collaborated with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)<sup>50</sup> and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in advancing blended finance mechanisms to derisk private investment in decentralized systems. Through its support of the LDC Investment Platform and backing of the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program in Low-Income Countries (SREP), part of the Climate Investment Funds, for example, ECOFIN has helped put together financial architectures enabling off-grid energy to be more feasible in structurally weak areas.

In addition, ECOFIN has supported inter-agency efforts like UN-Energy's Global Roadmap for Accelerated SDG7 Action, which identifies decentralized renewables as key instruments for universal energy access. By embedding energy democracy in wider development finance debates, like in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and subsequent meetings of the Financing for Development Forum, ECOFIN has also performed a normative function in matching investment priorities with local empowerment, equity, and climate resilience.

In total, ECOFIN's value added rests in its ability to agenda-set, to forge consensus, and to direct global financial flows towards more sustainable and equitable energy systems. As representatives gather to debate the nexus between climate action, economic sovereignty, and social rights, ECOFIN's legacy orientation towards decentralized solutions provides an opportunity to develop novel cooperative mechanisms, based not on extractive models of development, but on community resilience and prosperity shared.

## **5. Future challenges and possible solutions**

As developing countries face the combined pressures of reducing carbon emissions, building economic strength, and protecting human rights, several structural challenges are likely to grow in the coming years. One major issue is the increasing gap in technological and financial resources. Wealthier nations have the institutional support and financial flexibility to promote large-scale green transitions, while many low and middle-income countries struggle with heavy debt, dependence on fluctuating commodities, and weak public institutions. The danger is that global climate policies, without tailored methods for implementation, will further marginalize these countries in the international economic system.

Additionally, the rise of fragmented climate governance systems, such as multiple trade agreements, cross-border carbon markets, and external environmental standards, threatens to undermine the inclusive multilateralism of the United Nations. As focus shifts to informal "climate clubs" and regionally driven carbon policies, like the EU's CBAM and the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, developing nations may find themselves left out of the norm-setting processes that impact their economies directly. This fragmentation not only weakens the principle of shared but

<sup>50</sup> United Nations Capital Development Fund. (2022). LDC Investment Platform. <https://www.uncdf.org/lcd-investment-platform>

differentiated responsibilities and capabilities (CBDR-RC), but also creates a legitimacy gap that can hamper global cooperation.

At the same time, there is increasing worry about the securitization of climate-related financial resources, especially since public funds for adaptation and fair transitions are in short supply. Implementing Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which governs carbon markets, raises significant questions about land rights, social protections, and fair sharing of benefits, particularly in regions occupied by indigenous peoples and rural communities. Without strong accountability measures, market-based solutions might result in land loss, violations of rights, and a decline in democratic processes disguised as environmental actions.

To tackle these challenges, we need a broad and inclusive policy framework. First, climate finance should move away from piecemeal project support and instead focus on consistent, predictable, and low-interest funding. This includes fulfilling the long-standing promise to mobilize at least USD 100 billion yearly for developing nations<sup>51</sup>, expanding access to debt relief for those vulnerable to climate impacts, and creating green funding tools through the International Monetary Fund and multilateral development banks<sup>52</sup>.

Second, developing countries should be given the power to create nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) that reflect their social and economic conditions and development goals. They need more control over energy, land use, and industrial policies while enhancing their local institutional capacities. Regional development banks, South-South cooperation initiatives, and decentralized governance structures play crucial roles in this process.

Third, the global community should invest in developing rights-based climate governance systems that prioritize human dignity, fair processes, and equity in mitigation strategies. This means ensuring free, prior, and informed consent in carbon offset efforts, creating just transition frameworks in every national climate plan (NDC), and consistently involving affected communities in decision-making.

In summary, sustainable climate action should not compromise national sovereignty or social justice. Instead, it should serve as a means to develop a new paradigm—one that is co-created, based on partnership, fairness, and diversity. For ECOFIN, this is not just an economic challenge; it's a historic chance to reshape international cooperation in the age of climate change.

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<sup>51</sup> United Nations Environment Programme. (2022). Adaptation gap report 2022. <https://www.unep.org/resources/adaptation-gap-report-2022>

<sup>52</sup> Overseas Development Institute. (2023). Climate finance fundamentals: What you need to know. <https://odi.org/en/publications/climate-finance-fundamentals/>

## Annotated Biography

Hereafter you can find some links that we think could be helpful to deepen your knowledge on both the committee and the topic you will be discussing.

- The more inspiring and complete website when talking about the UN is their own: <https://www.un.org/>. Especially useful is their Official Document System (ODS) <https://documents.un.org/prod/ods.nsf/home.xsp>.
- The website of your committee is always a good place where to start, in the case of the UNHRC, it is the following: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/home>



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