



Esteemed Delegates,

Let me begin by introducing you to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at KnightMUN XII. My name is Tracie Smith and I am very honored to be serving as your Director for this conference. Currently, I am a senior at the University of Central Florida, studying both Elementary Education. I have been involved with Model United Nations for my entire college career and have seen every aspect of a conference. I have served and won awards as a delegate in conferences such as Florida Model United Nations, Southern Regional Model United Nations, Harvard National Model United Nations and National Model United Nations. I have acted as the Secretary General for two different conferences, one being KnightMUN XI and the other Orlando Model United Nations II. I have also served as a Director for both the Security Council and the General Assembly. I hope that this shows you that I am very well-versed in the inner workings of Model United Nations and I also want you to know that my knowledge will facilitate in providing you with an engaging and worthwhile experience during KnightMUN XII. I am here to assist you in your journey throughout this committee and conference. If you have any questions concerning the topics, the rules of procedure or the conference, please feel free to contact me.

While applying for a Directorship, ECOSOC was a committee that really stood out to me this year. In regards to how it's run, it is very similar to typical assembly committees but I encourage you to do thorough research about its rules of procedure before attending the conference. Please remember that position papers will be due during the first session of the committee. Please bring a hard copy at that time. A position paper is the best way to begin your research for these three complex topics. Make sure to follow all position paper guidelines available on the KnightMUN website.

This background guide will give you an outline of the selected topics, but it is up to you as the delegate to do more in-depth research to ensure that you are fully prepared for the committee. I highly recommend that you use the resources I have cited throughout the guide as they will provide an expanse of information. Please come to committee prepared to facilitate the greatest level of debate possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at tasmith91@knights.ucf.edu. Best of luck in your research and preparation!

Sincerely,
Tracie A. Smith
Director, United Nations Economic and Social Council
KnightMUN XII



The Economic and Social Council

Committee Background

The Economic and Social Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. It addresses economic, social and cultural issues. The Council consists of fifty-four Members of the United Nations elected by the General Assembly, represented by a single delegate.

The Economic and Social Council may make or initiate studies and reports with respect to international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related matters and may make recommendations with respect to any such matters to the General Assembly to the Members of the United Nations, and to the specialized agencies concerned. It may make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. It may prepare draft conventions for submission to the General Assembly, with respect to matters falling within its competence. It may call, in accordance with the rules prescribed by the United Nations, international conferences on matters falling within its competence.

Topic I: Preserving Genetic Privacy in Regard to Crime

Introduction

The preservation of genetic privacy, while a fairly new international issue, has become more prevalent with each passing year. Simply said, genetic privacy is freedom from unauthorized intrusion.¹ It protects territorial, bodily, psychological and informational integrity. For the purpose of this committee, we will be focusing primarily on the preservation of genetic privacy within international DNA databases.

What is a DNA database?

A DNA database is a computer database containing records of DNA profiles. Usually there are two different sources of these DNA profiles: crime scene DNA samples and individuals' DNA samples. DNA profiles from individuals must be stored with their names and sufficient other information to track them down if their DNA profile matches one from a crime scene. A DNA database of individuals' DNA profiles is not needed in order to compare the DNA profiles of known suspects with DNA left at a crime scene. Its only purpose is to introduce new suspects into the investigation via unexpected matches known as 'cold hits'. A match does not necessarily prove the individual was the perpetrator of the crime as there may be an innocent explanation for their DNA being at the scene, or the match could have occurred in error.²

Today, 60 countries worldwide operate national DNA databases while another 34 are considering putting them in place. The use of DNA evidence can bring great benefits

¹ <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/biotech/about-apropos/gloss-eng.php>

² <http://dnapolicyinitiative.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/>



to society specifically in areas with a high occurrence of crime. However, the mass storage of DNA samples and computerized profiles in databases raises important human rights concerns³. For example, because DNA is left wherever a person goes, DNA databases can be used to track individuals and their relatives, even if they haven't committed any crime. A DNA database can also be vulnerable to abuse by anyone who infiltrates the system. Errors and mistakes can also occur, including mix-ups in laboratories. Safeguards are therefore needed to protect human rights, whilst allowing the use of DNA in legitimate criminal investigations.

The growth of international DNA databases is often seen as the response to public demands for better policing. Yet entirely too many governments are running into the issue of having an alarming rate of creation, but with little public input. In some countries, DNA is being collected routinely from people on arrest, even when it has no relevance to the crime being investigated; sometimes DNA samples have been stored indefinitely from large numbers of innocent people. Other countries lack basic quality assurance for laboratories or a reliable system to track DNA evidence from the crime scene to the court and prevent mix-ups.

In the United States, both public and private entities are actively promoting DNA databases, often portrayed as technical solutions to high crime rates. The Department of Justice FBI Laboratory has worked with over 29 countries to plan and create their databases including promoting international agreements and authorizing legislation.⁴ The United Kingdom spent 12 years expanding its DNA database until, in response to human rights concerns and legal challenges; it removed more than one million innocent people's DNA profiles from the database and destroyed more than 6 million DNA samples.

The purpose of setting and implementing international standards for DNA databases in regard to genetic privacy is that each country will have a customary set of obligations to each of its citizen. The ideal standards would promote the "innocent until proven guilty" option and would never allow for DNA profiling to be the only way to convict a believed criminal.

The prospect of creating international standards for DNA databases has been discussed by organizations worldwide, yet the Forensics Genetics Policy Initiative—a collaboration of GeneWatch UK, Privacy International and the Council for Responsible Genetics—is actually making strides toward this while bearing in mind the importance of respect and protection of human rights.⁵ These standards are meant to focus on building civil society's capacity to engage in the policy-making processes that govern the development of national and international databases and the cross-border sharing of genetic information.

³ <https://www.privacyinternational.org/press-releases/pi-genewatch-and-the-council-for-responsible-genetics-launch-the-forensic-genetic>

⁴ <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/lab>

⁵ <http://dnapolicyinitiative.org/about-us-2/>



Could cross-border DNA databases work?

The creation and expansion of DNA databases is by no means limited to governments. Efforts to share DNA data between countries have also expanded, allowing for data sharing across borders with little oversight.

In Europe, data-sharing agreements have been established throughout the European Union—the Prüm DNA Search Network.⁶

A diverse private industry has developed to directly contract with foreign governments to build and maintain such systems, including offering policy recommendations. Over the last eleven years, Life Technologies has advised over 50 foreign governments and states on forensic DNA legislation, policy and law and regularly makes promotional presentations to foreign countries.⁷ In 2009, the Japanese government standardized their DNA collection and analysis for the country's forty-seven prefecture laboratories using Life Technologies DNA testing systems.⁸

There are still a lot of questions to consider when discussing international standards for DNA databases such as whether there'd be a restriction on whose DNA is collected and stored if a database is to be cost-effective. It's vital to note that the main benefits of DNA in criminal investigations appears to come through the improvement of the collection and analysis of crime scene DNA, ensuring that known suspects have their DNA analyzed and compared with relevant DNA evidence, and retaining the DNA profiles of repeat offenders.

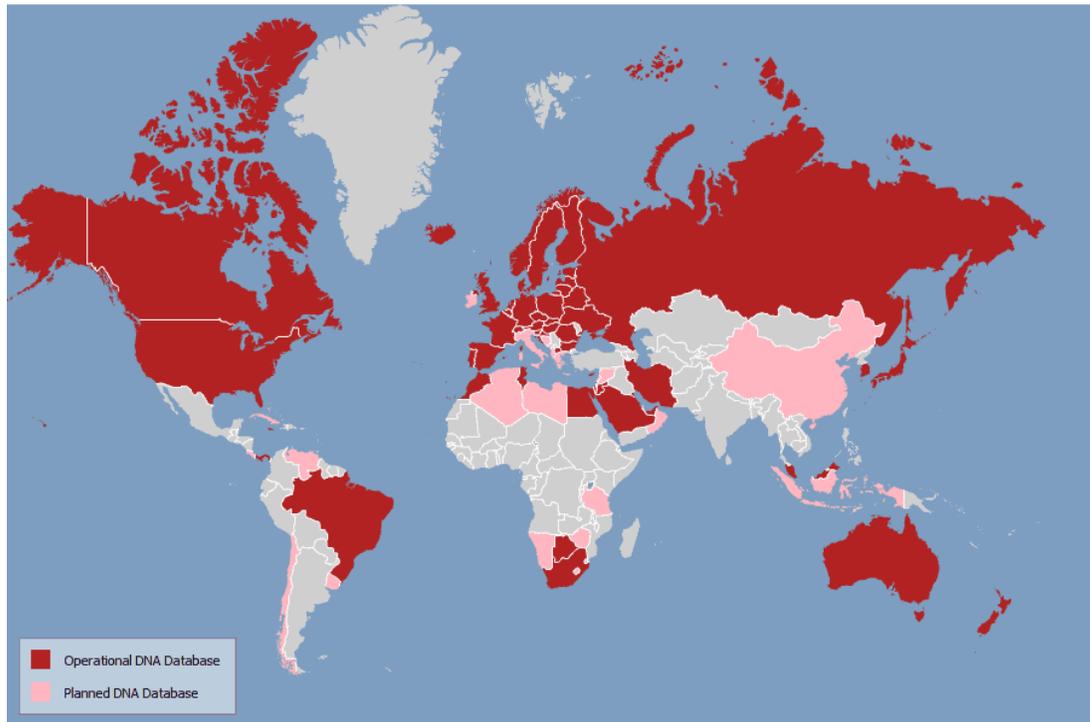
Below is a map representing countries which are presently engaging in DNA data-banking:⁹

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/police-cooperation/prum-decision/index_en.htm

⁷ <http://www.lifetechnologies.com/us/en/home.html>

⁸ <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aemP.UXPspW0>

⁹ http://wiki.dnapolicyinitiative.org/index.php?title=Main_Page



Questions to Consider:

1. Does your country currently have a DNA database? If so, are you doing everything you can to protect human rights while storing this information?
2. If your country does not have a database or is not in the process of creating one, then consider what it could mean for your policing methods if one were to be created.
3. What are your country's specific human rights concerns about DNA databases?
4. Has your country come across any kind of errors with the use of DNA?
5. Under what circumstances should the police be allowed to collect DNA and store samples and profiles?
6. Where does your country send its data and is there any way to destroy it once it's no longer needed?
7. What technical standards do you think should be met by the DNA profiles before they are loaded into the database?
8. What are your country's DNA collection policies?



Topic II: Millennium Development Goal 2: Education for All

Introduction

In 2000, the then 189 Member States of the United Nations established the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Plainly stated, these eight internationally agreed upon goals all have a timeline in which they should be completed. While each and every goal has specific completion dates and times, the second MDG—achieving universal primary education for both boys and girls—has a timeline of 2015. Despite the fact that several resolutions have been passed through the United Nations about this issue, there is still much work to be done.

Why should ECOSOC be concerned with this issue?

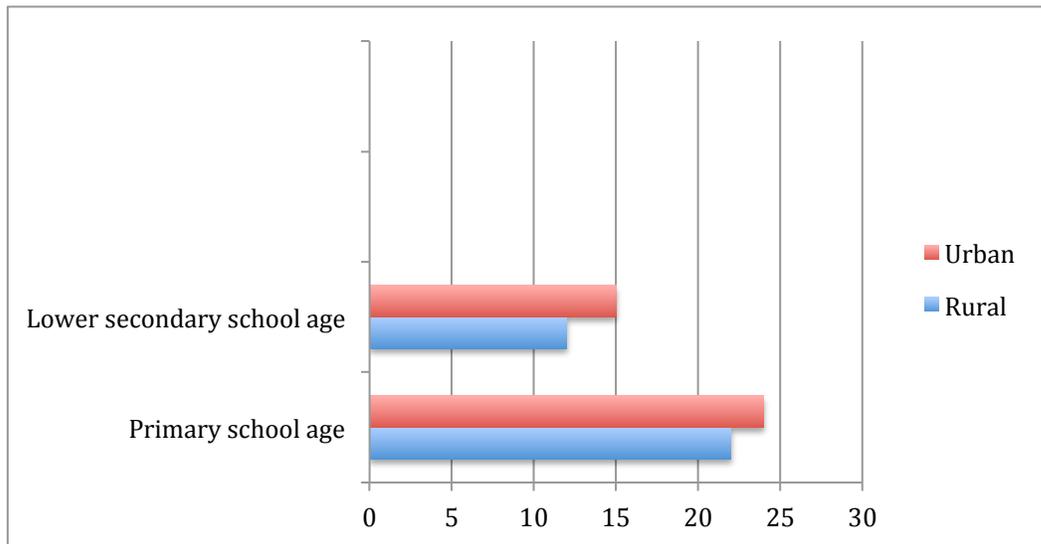
It's important to note that the right to education and the need for its full realization is essential for human development, sustainable growth, world peace, democratic and diplomatic societies and the promotion of all human rights. Too many children are still denied their right to primary education and if current trends continue, the world will not meet the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

What can ECOSOC do to assist in the implementation of these goals?

Each member state already has primary responsibility for its own social development and they should stay cognizant of the fact that national policies such as standardized education for all is absolutely critical to achieving the MDGs and the Education for All goals.

Why is this happening?

Developing regions have made impressive strides in expanding access to primary education, however when you take a closer look at the data, you see a different story. Despite the fact that from 2000-2011, the number of children out of school worldwide declined by almost half—from 102 million to 57 million— that progress has since slowed considerably. The main reason for this lack of a proper education is poverty. Poverty is a key factor in keeping children out of school. Children from the poorest households are three times as likely to be out of school as their richest peers while rural children are nearly twice as likely to be out of school as often as urban children.



Graph data can be found in the [Millennium Development Goals 2013 Report](#)

Where is this issue most prominent and what can the United Nations do?

The lack of a structured primary education for all is certainly an issue worldwide, however a majority—more than half—of the world’s out-of-school children reside in Sub-Saharan Africa. While there is still a rising demand for education from this growing population, it is difficult to establish any sort of standards when one in four children who enter primary school will most likely leave before reaching the last grade.¹⁰ Meanwhile in Southern Asia, one third of students enrolled in the first grade will leave school before reaching the last grade.

One of the most foremost issues here is that children who start school later than their peers are more likely to drop out before completing their education. In the Millennium Development Goals 2012 Report, it is said that “children from poorer households are more likely to delay the start of their education due to poor health and the risks associated with traveling long distances to school.”¹¹

What are the standards for monitoring educational progress?

According to the official list of MDG indicators, the methods of monitoring progress MDG 2 are:

- Net enrollment ratio (NER) in primary education
- Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary school
- Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds, men and women¹²

¹⁰ <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/mdg-report-2013-english.pdf>

¹² <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/host.aspx?Content=indicators/officialist.htm>



What is Net Enrollment Rate?

NER in terms of primary education is the ratio of the number of children of official primary school age who are enrolled in primary education to the total population of children of official primary school age.

Concept: Children of primary school age are defined by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED97). While more than one system of primary education exists within a country, the most widespread or common structure is used for determining the official school age group. Primary education normally consists of programs designed on a unit or project basis to give pupils a sound basic education in reading, writing and mathematics along with an elementary understanding of other subjects such as history, geography, natural science, social science, art and music.

What is the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary school?

The proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary measures the percentage of a cohort of pupils enrolled in grade 1 of the primary level of education in a given school year who are expected to reach the last grade of primary school, regardless of repetition.

What is the literacy rate of 15-24 year olds?

The literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds is defined as the proportion of the population aged 15-24 years who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on everyday life. Literacy, in addition to the ability to read and write, generally also encompasses numeracy, the ability to make simple arithmetic calculations.¹³ As a committee based on the importance of social change, ECOSOC has the ability to encourage the rest of the United Nations to take action in regard to the MDGs.

What Has Worked Thus Far

1. Countries such as Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya have abolished school fees, which led to a surge in enrollment. However, the surge has brought huge challenges in providing sufficient school buildings and teachers.
2. In Haiti, collaboration between the government, UN agencies and NGOs has changed the lives of 4,300 of the country's poorest children, thanks to an education project that provided school materials and supplies to 33 schools.¹⁴
3. In 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General launched the Global Education First initiative to make education a development priority, with the objective of reaching every child and improving learning outcomes.

¹³ <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mi/wiki/2-3-Literacy-rate-of-15-24-year-olds-women-and-men.ashx>

¹⁴ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/2008highlevel/pdf/newsroom/Goal%202%20FINAL.pdf>



Questions to Consider:

1. What policies could your country consider implementing to further the completion of this particular MDG?
2. Do the policies you currently use have the potential of working on international scale?
3. Does your country have an education strategy?
4. What is your country's net enrollment ratio?
5. Is your country ensuring sustainable educational systems, delivering quality services and retaining professional staff?
6. Is your country ensuring universal coverage in primary education, including for poor and/or underdeveloped populations?
7. How can we provide children with transportation to and from school when needed?
8. How can we offer free meals and basic health services at school to improve children's health, nutrition and cognitive development?
9. Does your country have any pre-primary school education programs?

Topic III: Poverty Eradication

Introduction

Extreme poverty, is stated as a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services. Extreme poverty was defined in 1996 by Joseph Wresinski, the founder of ATD Fourth World as "the absence of one or more factors enabling individuals and families to assume basic responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights. The situation may become widespread and result in more serious and permanent consequences."¹⁵

How is poverty measured?

According to the World Bank's poverty analysis, to compute a poverty measure, there are three necessary steps:

1. One has to define the relevant welfare measure.
2. One has to select a poverty line—that is a threshold below which a given household or individual can be classified as poor.
3. One has to select a poverty indicator— which is used for reporting for the population as a whole or for a population sub-group only.¹⁶

¹⁵ [UN declaration at World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995]

¹⁶<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPA/0,,contentMDK:20238988~menuPK:435055~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:430367~isCURL:Y,00.html>



One of the key issues in measuring poverty is that there is no sustainable and active poverty monitoring program that has managed to assess the extent and causes of poverty and examine the impact of growth. There are established programs—such as the World Bank’s Development Research Group—that have produced internationally comparable and global poverty estimates however data does not beget change.

The developing world has already obtained the first MDG target to cut the poverty rate in half by 2015. In 2010, the extreme poverty rate of \$1.25/day was cut in half. According to the estimates by the World Bank, 21 percent of people in the developing world lived at or below \$1.25/day. Regardless of this progress, even if the current rate of progress is maintained, well over 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015.¹⁷

Measuring poverty continues to be a barrier to effective policymaking. In many countries, the availability, frequency and quality of poverty monitoring data remain low, especially in small states and in countries and territories in fragile situations. Extreme poverty rates have fallen in every developing region, with one country, China, leading the way. In China, extreme poverty dropped from 60 per cent in 1990 to 16 per cent in 2005 and 12 per cent in 2010. Poverty remains widespread in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, although progress in the latter region has been substantial. In Southern Asia, poverty rates fell by an average of one percentage point annually—from 51 percent in 1990 to 30 percent two decades later.

In some developing countries, we continue to see a widening gap between those who can and cannot access opportunities so unfortunately it means that access to good schools, healthcare, electricity, safe water remain elusive for many people in the world. A meaningful path out of poverty requires a strong economy that produces jobs and good wages; a government that can provide schools, hospitals, roads, and energy; and healthy, well-nourished children who are the future human capital that will fuel economic growth.

What can still be done?

There are numerous amounts of strategies in existence that aim to eradicate poverty; however, most of them don’t focus on the financial aspect of the matter. If governments could provide zero-interest development financing then some of these poor and underdeveloped countries could jumpstart their economies. If safety nets and nutrition programs were more widely used, the impact of the food crises could be somewhat less damaging.

The World Bank Group has gotten thoroughly involved with working for a world free of poverty by boosting spending on agriculture to \$6-8 billion a year. If more organizations were willing to have quicker response programs in times of crisis, more vulnerable people can be reached and supported. For more than 60 years, the World Bank has partnered with governments worldwide, reducing poverty by providing financial and

¹⁷ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>



technical help. But the recent food, fuel, and economic crises have dealt a triple blow to gains made toward achieving MDG 1.

Propositions:

- Enhance the socio-economic skills of deprived youth
- Technology-related vocational training; schools and learning centers as community catalysts for poverty reduction
- Small-scale mining and sustainable development
- Building national capacities for research and policy analysis, developing country strategies and action plans and monitoring their implementation
- Ethical and human rights dimensions of poverty: towards a new paradigm in the fight against poverty
- Contributing to the eradication of poverty by strengthening human security

Some notable results:

The International Development Association is helping to achieve MDG 1 by providing \$15 billion to the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, which will affect 26 countries and \$1.4 billion to social safety net programs in 39 countries.¹⁸

- Ethiopia: Increased number of people with access to safe water from 60% in 1990 to 94% in 2008.
- Senegal: Protected more than 500,000 people through dam rehabilitation.
- Armenia: Reduced electricity grid losses 22% between 2002 and 2007.
- India: A watershed management project in five districts resulted in a 66% increase in household income.¹⁹

Methods to assess hunger and food security are improving immensely. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has introduced a number of significant improvements in the methodology it uses to measure the prevalence of hunger.²⁰ Despite these improvements, better data and additional indicators are needed to provide amore holistic assessment of undernourishment and food security. This, and all of the other data and results in turn, require strong commitment by international agencies such as ECOSOC to support the statistical capacity of developing countries and to continue the fight in eradicating poverty.

¹⁸ <http://www.worldbank.org/ida/>

¹⁹

<http://econ.worldbank.org/external/default/main?menuPK=469435&pagePK=64165236&piPK=64165141&theSitePK=469382>

²⁰ <http://www.fao.org/statistics/en/>