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United Nations Development Programme Background Guide 2025

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2025 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce to you our committee, the United Nations Development Programme (UNPD). Your committee's work is facilitated by volunteer staffers. This year's committee staff are: Director Steven Gentiel Vanhulle and Assistant Director Tamara C. Titz (Conference A), and Director Tomas Paramo and Assistant Director Jagdeep Bajaj (Conference B). Steven studied Global Economic Affairs with a focus on the intersection of environmental and economic policy at the Josef Korbel School of International Relations, University of Denver. His recent work experience includes support for a local grassroots NGO's work in rural Haiti to provide educational and health services for young girls and women. Tamara studies political science in Germany and has a background in Global Political Economy. Tomas graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in Global and Regional Studies. He is currently living in Bologna, Italy, where he's perfecting his Italian and traveling across Europe. Jagdeep is a final-year student of Politics, Philosophy and Economics (BSc) at Royal Holloway, University of London. The preparation of these materials was supported by Under-Secretaries-General Anthony Bassey (Conference A) and Johanna Günkel (Conference B) with contributions by Under-Secretary-General for Conference Management Paola Chávez (Conference A).

The topics on the agenda for this committee are:

1. Fostering Resilience and Inclusivity in the Informal Economy
2. Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Global Supply Chains

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the conference, each delegation should submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. ET on 1 March 2025 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers website](#).

Two resources, available to download from the NMUN website, serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

- The [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#), which explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions.
- The [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#), which includes the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for this committee, please contact the Deputy Secretaries-General at dsg.ny@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Steven Gentiel Vanhulle, Director
Tamara C. Titz, Assistant Director
Conference A

Tomas Paramo, Director
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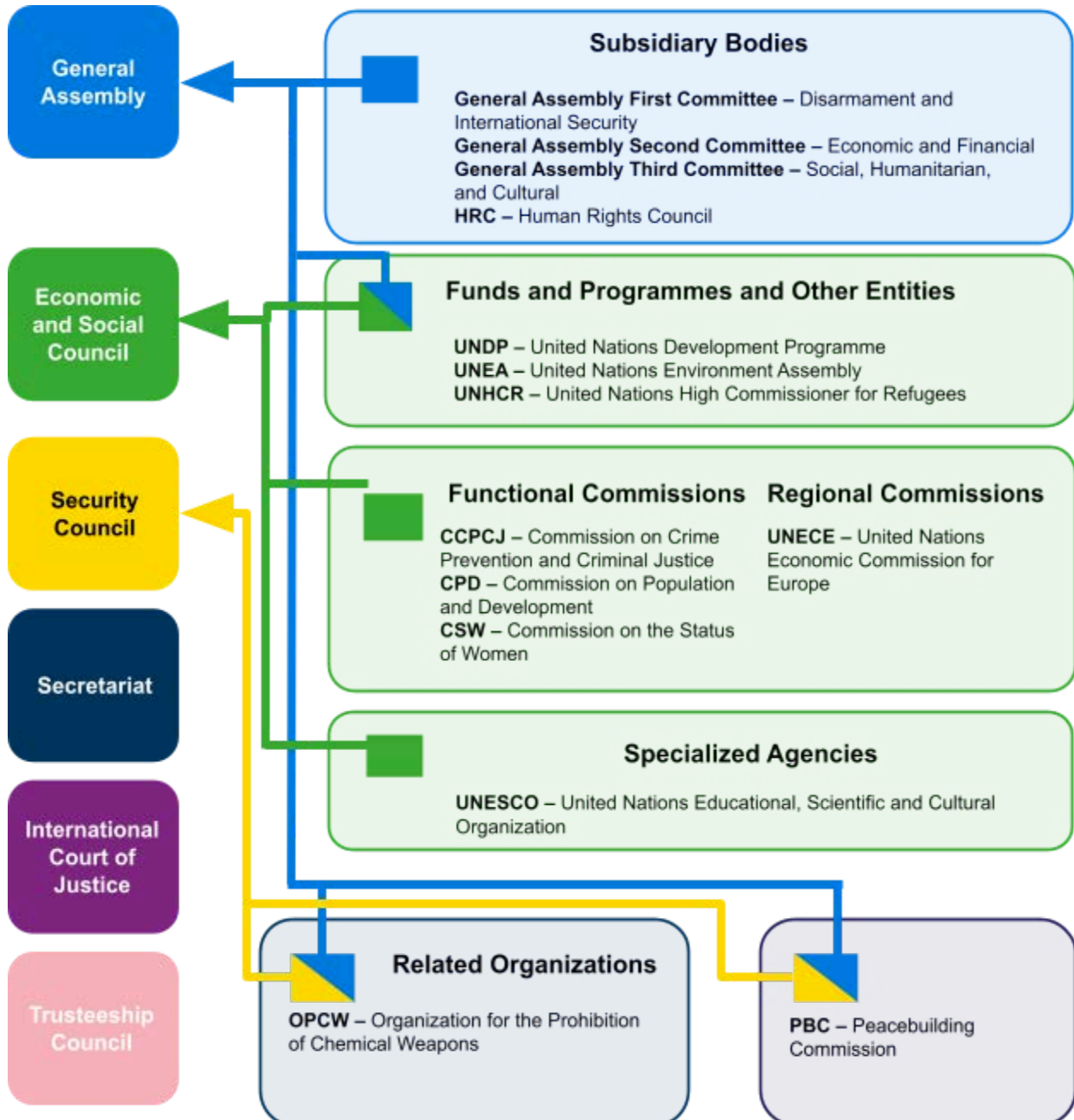
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United Nations System at NMUN·NY

This diagram illustrates the United Nations system simulated at NMUN·NY. It shows where each committee “sits” within the system to demonstrate the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee’s position, purpose, and powers within the United Nations system.





Committee Overview

Introduction

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) draws its purpose from Article 55 of the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945), which outlines that the organization should promote “higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development.”¹ UNDP is the leading United Nations agency on sustainable development and assists Member States with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and implementing the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2030 Agenda) (2015).²

NMUN simulates the **Executive Board** in terms of composition and size; however, delegates are not limited to the strict mandate of the Executive Board. For the purposes of NMUN•NY, the committee can make programmatic and policy decisions on issues within the mandate of UNDP in line with the overall function of the organization.

Mandate, Function, and Powers

As the lead United Nations agency on international development, UNDP’s core mandate is to “end poverty, build democratic governance, rule of law, and inclusive institutions.”³ As articulated in its *Strategic Plan 2022-2025* (2021), UNDP structures its work through a “3 x 6 x 3” framework, comprising three directions of change, six signature solutions it can provide to partners, and three enablers to allow these solutions to be effective.⁴ The directions of change, which are (1) structural transformation, (2) leaving no one behind, and (3) resilience, serve as areas of focus for UNDP to support Member States towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.⁵ Its signature solutions are poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.⁶ These signature solutions are predicated on and can be scaled up by three enablers, which are development financing, strategic innovation, and digitalization.⁷

While the following list is not exhaustive, UNDP’s mandate can be summarized as:

- UNDP will **generally**: support country-led efforts to achieve the SDGs with its projects and programs; work with governments to identify funding, investment, and partnership opportunities for programs focused on development; support Member States to develop their governance structures, institutional capacities, and legislative approaches; provide data and analysis to Member States; develop and foster partnerships between local, national, and international actors;

¹ United Nations Development Programme. *About us*. 2024; United Nations Conference on International Organization. *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. art. 55.

² United Nations Development Programme. *The SDGs in Action*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

³ United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2022. 2023*. p. 7.

⁵ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. p. 7.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2022. 2023*. p. 7.

⁷ *ibid.*



make recommendations to and coordinate with Member States, regional bodies, and other international actors on the achievement of the SDGs.⁸

- UNDP **will not generally**: direct Member States, non-governmental organizations, other United Nations agencies, and stakeholders to carry out specific development activities or actions; create new development frameworks or policies that do not align with those adopted by the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council; work on areas not covered by its *Strategic Plan 2022-2025*.⁹

Governance, Funding, and Structure

UNDP reports annually to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).¹⁰ Its leadership consists of an Administrator and an Executive Board.¹¹ The Administrator leads a team of five Regional Bureaus and provides support to other Bureaus, such as the Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy and the Crisis Bureau, to carry out UNDP's programs.¹² In addition, the Administrator also acts as the Vice-Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, which is the United Nations system's high-level forum for policy coordination on sustainable development and includes other United Nations entities focusing on sustainable development.¹³

The Executive Board oversees all of UNDP's projects, approves budgets, and ensures that projects adapt to changing situations and the unique needs of each Member State.¹⁴ The Executive Board consists of 36 rotating Member States from five geographic groups: eight from the group of African states, seven from the group of Asia-Pacific states, four from the group of Eastern European states, five from the group of Latin America and the Caribbean states, and 12 from the group of Western European and other States.¹⁵ Member States of the Executive Board are elected by ECOSOC each year for three-year terms.¹⁶ Only the group of Western European and other States decides on its rotation internally.¹⁷ The Executive Board holds three sessions each year: one annual session and two regular sessions, typically held in New York City.¹⁸ UNDP shares its Executive Board with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).¹⁹

⁸ *ibid.*; Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2024.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² United Nations Development Programme. *Leadership*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *2024 Organizational Chart*. 2024.

¹³ United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *Who We Are*. 2024.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *Information Note About The Executive Board Of UNDP, UNFPA And UNOPS*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Members of the Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Reports on Sessions*. 2024.

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Executive Board*. 2024.



UNDP's work is carried out by its offices in different Member States, which are focused on helping governments develop policies, institutional abilities, leadership skills, and resilience to achieve poverty eradication and reduce inequalities.²⁰ UNDP also administers and utilizes the United Nations Volunteers program and the United Nations Capital Development Fund to support its work for sustainable development.²¹ Similarly, UNDP works with prominent individuals as Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates to raise awareness on important global development issues.²²

To achieve its mandate, UNDP relies entirely on voluntary contributions from Member States, multilateral organizations, the private sector, and other sources.²³ Its budget is segmented into core resources, which are unrestricted and can be used for its day-to-day operations, and earmarked contributions, which can only be used for specific themes, programmes or projects.²⁴ In 2023, the total annual contributions to UNDP increased slightly by 1% to \$5 billion from \$4.9 billion the year before.²⁵ Roughly three quarters of its financial resources come from donor countries and multilateral institutions.²⁶

²⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *About Us*. 2024.

²¹ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *United Nations Handbook 2024-2025*. 2024. p. 8.

²² United Nations Development Programme. *Goodwill Ambassadors and Advocates*. 2024.

²³ United Nations Development Programme. *Funding*. 2024.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Funding Compendium 2023*. 2024. p. 5.

²⁶ *ibid.* p. 11.



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1. Fostering Resilience and Inclusivity in the Informal Economy

Introduction

The formal economy is regulated by governments that enforce standards in the workplace and provide protections for labor.²⁷ Conversely, the informal economy, also known as the informal sector, refers to any economic activity that is not covered by government regulations or protections, and includes work made up of non-traditional employment arrangements.²⁸ Non-traditional employment in the informal sector covers a wide range of jobs like seasonal work, street vending, waste picking, and subsistence farming.²⁹ The United Nations Global Compact Office considers employment to be decent work when it provides a fair income and sufficient workplace protections.³⁰ Since the informal sector is difficult to regulate by governments, informal activity tends to occur much more in industries that are highly gendered like unpaid family workers in the care economy.³¹ The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and civil society organizations have found that while informal economic activity occurs everywhere, it is most concentrated among vulnerable populations and in low-income countries.³²

For many people, informal employment provides opportunities that are not available in the formal economy.³³ In general, a larger informal economy reflects broader domestic macroeconomic conditions, like slow job growth and a lack of trust in the government to provide accountability or enforce existing regulations.³⁴ For example, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimate that over half of the world's labor force is informally employed, but much of this occurs in developing countries, where informal employment accounts for 85% of available jobs.³⁵ Adding to this, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in existing social protection systems and growing inequalities between countries, leaving up to 1 billion individuals at risk of extreme poverty by 2030.³⁶

²⁷ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. *Formal Economy*. 2022.

²⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief: Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. pp. 1-2; Canelas et al. United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Social protection and the informal economy: What do we know?*. 2022. p. 9.

²⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief: Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. p. 5.

³⁰ United Nations, Global Compact Office. *Realization of Decent Work for All*. N.d.

³¹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief: Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. pp. 8-9.

³² Chen et al. World Resources Institute. *Including the Excluded: Supporting Informal Workers for More Equal and Productive Cities in the Global South*. 2018. p. 1; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy*. 2024. p. 8.

³³ International Labour Organization. *Informal Economy*. 2024.

³⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief: Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. p. 7.

³⁵ International Labour Organization. *Informal Economy*. 2024; Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. p. 8.

³⁶ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. p. 1, 8.



While an informal economy can have important benefits like lower barriers to entry for vulnerable populations and providing a lifeline in conflict-affected areas, there are also significant costs that are incurred when the sector is large.³⁷ Since informal employment often thrives in places where governments have low regulatory or enforcement capacity, many of these jobs fail to meet the standards for decent work due to poor work conditions and limited worker protections or representation.³⁸ At the business level, informal enterprises tend to be less productive and often do not pay taxes, which reduces the government's ability to provide more robust social services.³⁹

Despite these challenges, embedding resilience and inclusion in the informal economy complements a multidisciplinary approach to poverty reduction at multiple levels of governance.⁴⁰ Resilience enables countries and individuals to more effectively mitigate and respond to the risks posed by economic crises and other emergencies like natural disasters through strong institutions and improved social protections.⁴¹ Inclusion is established when a government pursues policies that protect human dignity by reducing economic and social barriers to participation for disadvantaged populations.⁴² As such, the United Nations Secretary-General has emphasized that the informal economy can help countries recover from economic crises and drive transitions towards increased formality.⁴³ Along with facilitating transitions, there has been growing support for new policy approaches that strengthen connections between economic arrangements, resilience, and social inclusion by better aligning the interests of the formal and informal sectors.⁴⁴

International and Regional Framework

Efforts to improve resilience in the informal economy are consistent with human rights.⁴⁵ Article 23 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)* (1966) guarantees the right to work in safe conditions with fair compensation, free of discrimination, and in a way that preserves human dignity.⁴⁶ The United Nations Committee on

³⁷ International Labour Organization. *Informal Economy*. 2024.

³⁸ Smith Nightingale et al. The Urban Institute. *Informal and Nonstandard Employment in the United States: Implications for Low-Income Working Families*. 2011. p. 2; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief: Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind*. 2024. pp. 6-7; United Nations, Global Compact Office. *Realization of Decent Work for All*. N.d.

³⁹ Georgieva. International Monetary Fund. *The Informal Economy and Inclusive Growth*. 2019; Canelas et al. United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Social protection and the informal economy: What do we know?*. 2022. p. 7.

⁴⁰ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. pp. 7-8.

⁴¹ *ibid.* p. 8.

⁴² International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. *Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity*. 2013. p. 1; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development*. 2016. pp. 1-2, 17.

⁴³ United Nations, Executive Office of the Secretary-General. *Investing in Jobs and Social Protection for Poverty Eradication and a Sustainable Recovery*. 2021. pp. 17-18.

⁴⁴ Canelas et al. United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Social protection and the informal economy: What do we know?*. 2022. pp. 9-10.

⁴⁵ United Nations Sustainable Development Group. *Universal Values: Human rights-based Approach*. 2024.

⁴⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948. p. 6; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966. p. 2.



Economic, Cultural and Social Rights further expanded on the right to work through its General Comment No. 18 (2006).⁴⁷ This guidance addresses the causes of high degrees of informality, such as current unemployment and employment insecurity, by providing better alternatives and sufficient worker protections.⁴⁸

Given the concentration of informal work among vulnerable populations, fostering inclusivity in the informal economy can be achieved by actively promoting the rights of women and migrants.⁴⁹ In 1979, the General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which requires Member States to take action towards equal employment opportunities for women and safeguarding the right to decent work.⁵⁰ Likewise, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995) further emphasized the important role of women, particularly those who identify as Indigenous Peoples, in raising the floor for community resilience through the production of food and the preservation of the environment, often through informal work.⁵¹ The *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990) requires that States parties to the convention ensure migrant workers receive fair treatment in the workplace without fear of exploitation or discrimination as a result of their migrant status.⁵²

Resilience and inclusivity for workers in an informal economy is also enshrined in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2015).⁵³ General Assembly resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” established the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁵⁴ Progress towards a more inclusive and resilient informal economy impacts SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).⁵⁵ In particular, SDG target 8.3 on the promotion of development-oriented policies on decent job creation and the formalization of small businesses and SDG target 8.8 on protecting labor rights for women and migrants outline a path towards a just transition of the informal economy by promoting development policies that address financing gaps for firms and expand labor’s access to jobs with safe and secure working conditions.⁵⁶ In addition, SDG target 8.5 on achieving full employment by 2030 highlights the need for inclusive employment to reduce gender inequalities and other forms of

⁴⁷ United Nations, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. *The Right to Work: General Comment No. 18*. 2006.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* p. 4.

⁴⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979; United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (A/RES/45/158)*. 1990; United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*. 1995.

⁵⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979. p. 195.

⁵¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women (A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1)*. 1995. p. 157.

⁵² United Nations, General Assembly. *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (A/RES/45/158)*. 1990. pp. 13-14.

⁵³ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ibid.* pp. 14-15, 18-21.

⁵⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all: Targets and Indicators*. N.d.



discrimination.⁵⁷

Recognizing the gap in funding to achieve the development priorities outlined in the 2030 Agenda, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (2015) is a framework to finance development.⁵⁸ For the informal economy, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* focuses on inefficient and ineffective tax regulations and their role in driving individuals and firms into the informal sector.⁵⁹ Highlighting the challenges posed by poor government transparency, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* encourages approaches that target corruption and tax evasion through progressive tax policies with strong disclosure and anti-abuse mechanisms.⁶⁰ In addition, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* calls for policy coherence between countries to discourage cheating and lessen the impacts of financial crises in the global economy.⁶¹

Role of the International System

UNDP is committed to strengthening resilience and inclusivity in the informal economy by embedding these principles into its strategies and programmes.⁶² The *UNDP Strategic Plan 2022-2025* focuses on poverty eradication, which is at the core of improving resilience and inclusivity.⁶³ To achieve this, UNDP has taken a multidisciplinary approach that targets the drivers of the informal economy.⁶⁴ In particular, UNDP has worked to expand opportunities in the formal sector and improve social protection systems, particularly in communities traditionally excluded from the formal economy like women, youth, and vulnerable populations.⁶⁵ To address the gaps in data collection and analysis, UNDP created the Informal Economy Explorer, which is an online interactive platform that policymakers can use to evaluate the relationships between the informal economy and over 190 different indicators.⁶⁶ In addition, UNDP Accelerator Labs allows for collaboration between countries to speed up progress towards sustainable development.⁶⁷ Concerned with the vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP Accelerator Labs explored the impacts of growing digitalization in the informal economy by providing general guidance to informal businesses and performing country-level analyses on scaling digital transformations to fuel new innovations.⁶⁸

As one of the main partners for UNDP, ILO focuses on transitioning informal workers into the formal economy.⁶⁹ ILO's *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)*

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa Action Agenda) (A/RES/69/313)*. 2015.

⁵⁹ *ibid.* p. 11.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* pp. 11-12.

⁶¹ *ibid.* pp. 47-48.

⁶² Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021.

⁶³ *ibid.* p. 1, 7.

⁶⁴ United Nations Development Programme. *United Nations Development Programme Annual Report 2023*. 2024. p. 9.

⁶⁵ *ibid.* p. 9, 26.

⁶⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Informal Economy Data Explorer*. 2022.

⁶⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Accelerator Labs: About Us*. 2024.

⁶⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Informality: Digitalization*. 2024.

⁶⁹ International Labour Organization. *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)*. 2015; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy*. 2024.



details the need for strong regulatory mechanisms and inclusive economic growth.⁷⁰ To achieve these goals, ILO recommended governments pursue an integrated legal framework that addresses the drivers of informal participation.⁷¹ To build resilience, ILO further provided guidance on inclusive employment practices and the importance of incorporating informal workers into existing social protection schemes.⁷² In addition, ILO published a supplementary document titled *The Informal Economy and Decent Work: A Policy Resource Guide* to better understand the size and scope of informal economies.⁷³ Partnering with the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ILO helped establish new international standards for collecting and measuring the informal economy.⁷⁴ ILO has also supported expanding opportunities in the formal economy by aligning decent work with the 2030 Agenda to create new jobs and bridge the gap in financing for small businesses.⁷⁵

In an effort to reduce the disproportionate number of women in the informal economy and promote gender equality, UNDP also partners with UN Women.⁷⁶ UN Women's *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy* (2024) provides guidance on ways to increase resilience for women through transformative change and a rights-based approach.⁷⁷ In the context of the informal economy, UN Women advocates for additional support for entrepreneurship through innovative investment strategies and increased access to social protections.⁷⁸ As such, UN Women addresses macroeconomic drivers of the gender pay gap by recognizing, reducing, and redistributing resources.⁷⁹ Along with this, UN Women has noted the pervasiveness of harmful gender norms as a significant factor that forces women to seek out alternatives in the informal economy.⁸⁰

The private sector, civil society organizations, and multi-stakeholder partnerships help implement programs at the local level, growing resilience and inclusivity in the informal economy.⁸¹ For example, UNDP has cultivated partnerships with private banking institutions in Sierra Leone through the Informal Economy Project to develop digital products that can provide digital microfinance support in rural communities.⁸² Civil society has also helped bridge the gap between policy and action by supporting the

⁷⁰ International Labour Organization. *Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)*. 2015.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ International Labour Organization. *The Informal Economy and Decent Work: A Policy Resource Guide Supporting Transitions to Formality*. 2013.

⁷⁴ United Nations, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. *Webinar Series on Selected Topics in the System of National Accounts: SNA Overview*. 2021. p. 2.

⁷⁵ International Labour Organization. *Decent Work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2017.

⁷⁶ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. pp. 11-12.

⁷⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy*. 2024.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* pp. 21-22.

⁷⁹ *ibid.* pp. 23-24, 28.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* p. 29.

⁸¹ *ibid.* pp. 33-34; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. *About WIEGO*. 2024.

⁸² United Nations Development Programme. *Informal Economy Project*. 2024.



need for improved data collection and analysis on informal economic activity.⁸³ This can provide policymakers with crucial insights on best practices for inclusive stakeholder engagement.⁸⁴

Transitioning from an Informal to a Formal Economy

Transitioning from informal to formal economy provides workers with better access to financial services, social security, fair wages, and economic stability.⁸⁵ Transition to the formal economy involves several steps, such as promoting access to more formal and secure financial services and social security systems.⁸⁶ It would also require creating a legal framework that targets government capacity, social safety nets, and accountability, and provide education and training programs for informal workers to aid their transition into the formal economy.⁸⁷ With support from governments and international partners, these transitions help establish fair working conditions in government policy.⁸⁸ UNDP highlights the importance of these changes in its current Strategic Plan, to ensure that affected persons are provided with social security, fair wages, and economic stability.⁸⁹

Incorporation into the formal economy offers individuals and groups legal rights, access to resources, and the capacity to engage in formal economic activities that promote growth and stability.⁹⁰ This recognition underpins broader societal growth and resilient societies in times of crises by facilitating business loans and financial support, which promote business development and capacity-building that were previously unavailable to businesses in the informal economy.⁹¹ It also provides government oversight for labor and policy provisions to improve labor standards like safer conditions, fair wages, and social protections for workers when they get included into the formal economy.⁹²

In addition, supporting Indigenous Peoples is an integral part of the solution to wider social and economic challenges like access to education, health care, and economic opportunities, which are all factors of development.⁹³ Indigenous communities advocate for formal recognition to better exercise their land rights and cultural identity.⁹⁴ They are also protected by legal frameworks, treaties and policies that secure land and property ownership, resource management and cultural conservation rights, and promote economic

⁸³ Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. *About WIEGO*. 2024.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ International Labour Organization. *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy (ILC.103/V/1)*. 2014.

⁸⁶ *ibid.* p. 13.

⁸⁷ *ibid.* p. 13.

⁸⁸ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. p. 1.

⁸⁹ *ibid.* p. 3.

⁹⁰ Lewis et al. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Urban Crisis and the Informal Economy: Surviving, Managing, Thriving in Post-Conflict Cities*. 2019. p. 35.

⁹¹ *ibid.* p. 20.

⁹² *ibid.* p. 31.

⁹³ International Labour Organization. *Policy Brief: COVID-19 and the world of work: A focus on indigenous and tribal peoples*. 2020. p. 5; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Recognizing Need to Bolster Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Third Committee Underscores Importance of Respecting Traditional Lands, Valuable Conservation Knowledge (GA/SHC/4379)*. 2023.

⁹⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Recognizing Need to Bolster Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Third Committee Underscores Importance of Respecting Traditional Lands, Valuable Conservation Knowledge (GA/SHC/4379)*. 2023.



stability, environmental sustainability, and social resilience to maintain their way of life and improve their economic situation.⁹⁵ However, some Indigenous groups resist formalization due to potential eroded traditional cultural practices and increasing government oversight clashing with community values.⁹⁶ As such, some Indigenous Peoples prioritize informal economic systems over formalization.⁹⁷ By providing access to sustainable sources of income, Indigenous Peoples can strengthen their self-determination and have the opportunity to build long-term economic independence through the preservation and use of their natural resources.⁹⁸

To address informality, governments often offer simplified business registration processes and implement stricter enforcement of work laws.⁹⁹ However, not all informal groups, such as street vendors, waste pickers, and domestic workers, want to transition to the formal economy because they may face increased taxation, bureaucratic barriers, and stricter regulations, which could limit their flexibility, reduce their earnings, and expose them to greater competition or exploitation within formal labor markets.¹⁰⁰ Case studies, like UNDP's activities in Cambodia, provide significant insights into common challenges and effective measures for a more efficient and inclusive transition to the formal economy.¹⁰¹ In Cambodia, UNDP's efforts led to a formalization framework for micro enterprises to address challenges of the informal economy.¹⁰² The framework promoted a public awareness campaign about formal employment responsibilities and strategic partnerships between government and civil society.¹⁰³ The framework encouraged implementing a temporary incentive program through subsidies or preferential tax rates, aimed at low-earning workers or specific enterprises to tackle affordability issues.¹⁰⁴

Formal recognition and formalization processes for migrants can safeguard their rights, resources, and opportunities, which promotes economic integration and inclusion into society.¹⁰⁵ Policies, such as residency permits, integration programs, and simplifying of legal documentation, which are mainstreamed around the world, ensure that these migrants have access to relevant institutions, including health, education, and legal protection.¹⁰⁶ According to ILO, the inclusion of migrant labor into formal markets will enable them to access financing institutions to invest in businesses, thereby stimulating economic growth

⁹⁵ *ibid.*

⁹⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Indigenous Peoples Excluded from Political Power, Ejected from Lands, Faced Corporations Bent on Destroying Life-Giving Forests, Permanent Forum Told (HR/5021)*. 2010.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Recognizing Need to Bolster Indigenous Peoples' Rights, Third Committee Underscores Importance of Respecting Traditional Lands, Valuable Conservation Knowledge (GA/SHC/4379)*. 2023.

⁹⁹ Handayani. Asian Development Bank. *Social Protection for Informal Workers in Asia*. 2016. pp. 401-403.

¹⁰⁰ International Labour Organization. *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy (ILC.103/V/1)*. 2014. p. 25.

¹⁰¹ International Labour Organization. *Transitioning from the informal to the formal economy (ILC.104/V/1)*. 2015; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. *Occupational Groups in the Informal Economy*. 2024; United Nations Development Programme. *Understanding The Path To Formalization In Cambodia: An Integrated Vision*. 2023. p.110.

¹⁰² *ibid.* pp. 115-116.

¹⁰³ *ibid.* pp. 104-109.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* pp.114-115.

¹⁰⁵ International Labour Organization. *Extending social protection to migrant workers, refugees and their families. A guide for policymakers and practitioners*. 2021. p. 165.

¹⁰⁶ International Organization for Migration. *Promising Practices in the Provision of Essential Services to Migrants*. 2022. pp. 15-16.



within the state.¹⁰⁷ By doing so, the whole community, including migrants, can benefit, leading to a more cohesive and affluent society.¹⁰⁸ Official recognition thus means an inclusive environment that values diversity and empowers all people to prosper.¹⁰⁹

Overall, UNDP has been actively involved in the process of transitioning from an informal to a formal economy.¹¹⁰ Transitions provide legislative frameworks and policies, offer training and capacity-building opportunities, and expand social protection programs for workers in the informal economy.¹¹¹ In particular, UNDP promotes multiple initiatives to bring informal workers into social security systems, especially in states like Togo, Zambia, Rwanda, or Tanzania, through sectoral approaches or government engagement in the design of contributory schemes.¹¹²

Women in the Informal Economy

Women in the informal economy face numerous challenges that perpetuate gender inequality and obstruct women's economic empowerment.¹¹³ These challenges include unsafe working conditions, unstable employment opportunities, low wages, and a lack of social protection.¹¹⁴ According to UN Women, many of these barriers appear most often in women-dominated industries, like domestic work, street food vending, and sex work, where labor is undervalued and usually unregulated.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the unpredictability of income and the absence of benefits, such as health insurance, maternity leave, or retirement plans, contribute to financial insecurity, making it difficult for women to overcome poverty and achieve financial independence and self-sufficiency.¹¹⁶ As a result, these constraints not only stall individual performance but also increase broader societal imbalances, limiting overall economic development and social improvement in places where women's contributions are overlooked and underestimated.¹¹⁷

Women in the informal economy contribute to household incomes and local economies, frequently performing in underpaid, unpaid, or disregarded labor that is essential to society.¹¹⁸ Women also face

¹⁰⁷ International Labour Organization. *Extending social protection to migrant workers, refugees and their families. A guide for policymakers and practitioners*. 2021. p. 33.

¹⁰⁸ International Organization for Migration. *Migrant Integration and Social Cohesion*. 2024.

¹⁰⁹ United Nations Human Settlements Programme. *Local inclusion of migrants and refugees: A gateway to existing ideas, resources and capacities for cities across the world*. 2020. pp. 10-12.

¹¹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Informality and Social Protection in African Countries: A Forward-looking Assessment of Contributory Schemes*. 2021.

¹¹¹ *ibid.* pp. 8-9.

¹¹² *ibid.* p. 48.

¹¹³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women in informal economy*. 2024.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women Migrant Workers' Journey through the Margins: Labour, Migration, and Trafficking*. 2016. pp. 59-68.

¹¹⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Promoting Inclusion Through Social Protection: Report on the World Social Situation 2018*. 2018.

¹¹⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Theories of Change for UN Women's Thematic Priorities: Achieving Transformative Results for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*. 2017. pp. 24, 27-28.

¹¹⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy brief: Transforming the informal economy to leave no one behind*. 2023. p. 5.



several problems, including gender discrimination and limited access to social services.¹¹⁹ These obstacles not only hinder women's economic prospects but also increase their vulnerability to various types of exploitation and abuse.¹²⁰ According to ILO, 32.7% of women work on their own account compared to 53.5% of men.¹²¹ This vulnerability is worsened by cultural norms, such as gender stereotypes, motherhood penalty, and pay gap, which devalue women's labor and their ability to advance in their jobs.¹²² UNDP's *Gender Equality Strategy, 2022-2025* highlights that women's contributions are not given adequate recognition, thereby trapping women, communities, and states in a cycle of gender inequality and economic under-development by addressing structural inequalities, promoting resilience inclusivity, and empowering marginalized women through targeted investments and partnerships.¹²³ Addressing these concerns ensures fair treatment of women and promotes equitable advancement within their communities.¹²⁴

Migrant women frequently turn to the informal sector due to language barriers, legal constraints, and the need to provide for their families in a new environment.¹²⁵ Indigenous women often engage in traditional crafts, agriculture, and market trade within the informal economy to preserve cultural heritage and support their families.¹²⁶ Many women residing in foreign countries resort to informal work due to language barriers and lack of Identification documents or work permits.¹²⁷ This often leads to exploitation, limited social protection, and job insecurity.¹²⁸ The risks of informal work often affect their children, thus perpetuating these challenges in another generation.¹²⁹

Due to discrimination and a lack of acceptance in formal employment sectors, women in the LGBTQIA+ community may be forced to work in the informal economy.¹³⁰ Individuals often face increased risks of experiencing social stigmatization, economic insecurity, lack of legal protection, discrimination, and

¹¹⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy brief: Transforming the informal economy to leave no one behind*. 2023. p. 4.

¹²⁰ Niras. United Nations Development Programme. *Gendered Value Chains Study: Barriers and Opportunities*. 2024. p. 40.

¹²¹ Pozzan et al. International Labour Organization. *Building Back Better for Women: Women's Dire Position in the Informal Economy*. 2020. p. 5.

¹²² *ibid.* p. 11.

¹²³ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2022-2025 (DP/2022/18)*. 2022. p. 8.

¹²⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Stronger Government Action, Financing Key to Better Protect Women during Armed Conflict, Involve Them in Peace Processes, Speakers Tell Security Council (SC/15463)*. 2023.

¹²⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *From Informality to Inclusion: Exploring the Informal Economy Landscape in Marawi City through a Systems Approach*. 2024. p. 40; International Labour Organization. *Indigenous peoples in a changing world of work: Exploring indigenous peoples' economic and social rights through the Indigenous Navigator*. 2021.

¹²⁶ *ibid.* pp. 32-36.

¹²⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women in informal economy*. 2024; International Organization for Migration. *Promising Practices in the Provision of Essential Services to Migrants*. 2022. pp. 37-38.

¹²⁸ International Labour Organization. *Informal economy*. 2024.

¹²⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development et al. *Tackling Vulnerability in the Informal Economy. Chapter 3. Risks and vulnerabilities in the informal economy*. 2019. p. 21, 41.

¹³⁰ Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. *The economic costs and development impact of exclusion of LGBT people*. 2014.



gender based-violence.¹³¹ Inclusivity can be strengthened by including the implementation of anti-discrimination laws, the provision of targeted support services, and the creation of safer, more inclusive workplaces.¹³² More public awareness initiatives and community education can help reduce social stigma, make work spaces more inclusive, and mainstream LGBTQIA+ rights.¹³³

UNDP has launched projects to promote women's resilience and opportunities in the formal economy.¹³⁴ In Mongolia, UNDP partnered with the government to educate women herders on sustainable farming methods, and providing access to microcredit.¹³⁵ This approach has allowed women to diversify their income sources while also building resilience to the harmful effects of climate change.¹³⁶ In the Philippines, UNDP has worked with local communities in post-conflict settings like the Islamic City of Marawi to consolidate and co-design context-specific recommendations, such as an area-based approach for inclusive local economic development, Halal value chains, and local mapping of community-based practices.¹³⁷

Strategic interventions like targeted, gender-sensitive approaches based on ground-level analysis can support women, boost productivity, and facilitate transitions to formality.¹³⁸ In Somalia, UNDP provided vocational training and business development services to women.¹³⁹ UNDP has worked to expand economic opportunity and reduce gender inequalities in the informal economy by encouraging women to work in non-traditional industries and supporting their entrepreneurial enterprises.¹⁴⁰ UN Women advocates for additional support for entrepreneurship through innovative investment strategies and increased access to social protections.¹⁴¹ As such, UN Women addresses macroeconomic drivers of the gender pay gap by recognizing, reducing, and redistributing resources.¹⁴² Along with this, UN Women has noted the pervasiveness of harmful gender norms as a significant factor that forces women to seek out alternatives in the informal economy.¹⁴³

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² United Nations Development Programme et al. *Advancing the Human Rights and Inclusion of LGBTI People. A Handbook for Parliamentarians.* 2022. p. 76.

¹³³ International Labour Organization. *Inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTQ+) persons in the world of work: A learning guide.* 2022. pp. 27-28.

¹³⁴ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2022-2025 (DP/2022/18).* 2022. p. 15; United Nations Development Programme. *Listening to Women Entrepreneurs in Afghanistan: Their Struggle and Resilience.* 2024. p. 6.

¹³⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Sustainable model activities to support herders' access to market piloted.* 2023.

¹³⁶ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Policy Brief: Transforming the Informal Economy to Leave No One Behind.* 2024. p. 4.

¹³⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *From Informality to Inclusion: Exploring the Informal Economy Landscape in Marawi City through a Systems Approach.* 2024. pp. 49-52.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* p. 40.

¹³⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *The role of Somali women in the private sector.* 2014. p. 10.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* p. 3.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Economic Empowerment Strategy.* 2024. pp. 21-22.

¹⁴² *ibid.* pp. 23-24, 28.

¹⁴³ *ibid.* p. 29.



Legal safeguards, educational initiatives that improve skills and economic opportunities, and access to microfinance are mechanisms for women in the informal economy to live more resilient lives.¹⁴⁴

Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) provide resources and support collective bargaining to improve their working conditions.¹⁴⁵ Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), and ActionAid International are important players in these efforts.¹⁴⁶ SEWA's Campaign on social security and WIEGO's Urban Policies Programme empower women by closing system gaps like social protection for informal workers and physical/manual registration, promoting inclusive practices and addressing exclusionary practices through analysis to strengthen inclusionary governance.¹⁴⁷ ActionAid International advocates for legal reforms, educates women, and supports their economic efforts with the ultimate goal of creating a more equal and friendly environment for women in the informal economy.¹⁴⁸

Conclusion

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased participation in the informal economy has renewed efforts to foster resilience and inclusive economic arrangements.¹⁴⁹ Women in the informal economy face unsafe working conditions, low wages, and social protection, hindering economic development.¹⁵⁰ UNDP supports transitions towards formality by assisting countries with legislative frameworks, training, and capacity-building opportunities for workers in the informal economy.¹⁵¹ NGOs like WIEGO, SEWA, and ActionAid International play critical roles in advocating for women's rights, providing resources, and supporting collective bargaining.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Framework for women's economic empowerment of the MELYT (mujeres, economía local y territorios): A practical model for women's economic empowerment for dynamic and sustainable territories in the COVID-19 Recovery*. 2021.

¹⁴⁵ McCracken et al. European Union. *Mapping of NGOs working for Women's Rights in selected EU Member States*. 2016. pp. 10-11.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment. *Leave No One Behind: A Call to Action for Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment*. 2017. p. 20.

¹⁴⁷ Self-Employed Women's Association. *Home*. 2024; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. *About WIEGO*. 2024; Self-Employed Women's Association. *Campaign on social security*. 2017; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. *Urban Policies Programme*. 2024.

¹⁴⁸ ActionAid International. *Who cares for the future: finance gender responsive public services!*. 2020. p. 14.

¹⁴⁹ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021. p. 8.

¹⁵⁰ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Gender Equality Strategy, 2022-2025 (DP/2022/18)*. 2022.

¹⁵¹ Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Office for Project Services. *UNDP Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 (DP/2021/28)*. 2021; United Nations, Executive Office of the Secretary-General. *Investing in Jobs and Social Protection for Poverty Eradication and a Sustainable Recovery*. 2021.

¹⁵² Self-Employed Women's Association. *Home*. 2024; Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing. *About WIEGO*. 2024.



Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: What role can informality serve in building more resilient communities? What challenges does informality pose for countries and how can they be mitigated? Are there ways that a robust informal economy can stimulate economic growth for developing countries? How can partnerships between UNDP and civil society bridge the gap for countries with limited regulatory capacity? How can policy be reimagined to better incorporate a rights-based approach? What solutions should countries consider to reduce gender gaps and exploitation in the informal economy? Does economic growth need to be independent from policies for resilience?



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2. Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Global Supply Chains

Introduction

Inclusive and sustainable supply chains enhance economic development and poverty reduction.¹⁵³ Global supply chains account for 80% of international trade and employ 450 million workers worldwide.¹⁵⁴ The United Nations Global Compact defines supply chain sustainability as the management of environmental, social, and economic effects of producing and distributing goods and services, while promoting responsible governance practices at every stage of their lifecycle.¹⁵⁵ Building more inclusive supply chains includes sourcing from historically underutilized suppliers, such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), minority-owned businesses, women-owned companies, and Indigenous communities.¹⁵⁶ Inclusive and sustainable supply chains are pivotal in fostering economic development, with SMEs constituting the base for the development of global economies.¹⁵⁷ SMEs support social equity within supply chains by providing local jobs to local populations and reducing poverty via improved living standards.¹⁵⁸

Sustainable supply chains are essential for mitigating environmental degradation and combating climate change.¹⁵⁹ Environmental impacts from supply chains are often severe and apparent, especially when regulations surrounding global supply chains are lax and natural resources are abundant.¹⁶⁰ This can be seen in multiple privately owned companies having dire impacts on the environment such as high carbon emissions, deforestation, and harm to biodiversity.¹⁶¹ The consequences of poor environmental practices are evident through toxic waste, water contamination, long-term harm to ecosystems, and harmful air emissions.¹⁶²

Social equity within supply chains can address issues such as child labor, forced labor, and gender inequality.¹⁶³ The United Nations Global Compact defines discrimination within the workplace as treating individuals differently or less favorably based on traits unrelated to their qualifications or the essential

¹⁵³ United Nations Global Compact Network USA. *UN Global Compact Launches Sustainable Supplier and SME Programme*. 2024.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Industrial Development Organization. *UNIDO and Sustainable Supply Chains*. 2023. p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations Global Compact. *Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement*. p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Global Compact et al. *The State of Sustainable Supply Chains: Building Responsible and Resilient Supply Chains*. 2016.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations Global Compact Network USA. *UN Global Compact Launches Sustainable Supplier and SME Programme*. 2024.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ United Nations Global Compact. *Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement*. 2015.

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ International Institute for Sustainable Development. *The Evolution of Private Sector Action in Sustainable Development*. 2021. p. 2.

¹⁶² United Nations Global Compact. *Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement*. 2015.

¹⁶³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Sustainable Global Supply Chains: G7 Leadership on UNGP Implementation*. 2022.



requirements of the job.¹⁶⁴ The United Nations Global Compact targets child labor, forced labor, and labor inequality with its fourth, fifth, and sixth principles, providing a framework for businesses to align their operations with.¹⁶⁵

Inclusive and sustainable supply chains rely on transparency and risk management for economic viability and improved supply chain management.¹⁶⁶ Supply chain management is the coordination and oversight of all processes related to procurement, transformation, and logistics management activities that are essential to fulfill the customer's needs.¹⁶⁷ By fostering transparency, companies can build trust with consumers and investors, leading to increased transparent practices enabling accurate data collection, which is essential for regulatory compliance.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, integrating sustainability into supply chain management promotes economic viability, financial stability, and long-term corporate responsibility.¹⁶⁹

International and Regional Framework

Global supply chains must promote human rights and adhere to international human rights law.¹⁷⁰ The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) forms the foundation for human rights principles in business activities.¹⁷¹ Building on this, the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) (1966) establishes Member States' obligations to prevent adverse impacts of business activities on human rights.¹⁷² The *United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* (UNGPs), adopted in 2011, also serves as a global standard for preventing and addressing human rights violations related to business activities, including those occurring within supply chains.¹⁷³ The principles outline the corporate and government responsibility to respect human rights and provide access to help for victims of business-related abuses.¹⁷⁴ Protecting human rights from business activities is further elaborated in the *United Nations Economic and Social Council's General Comment No. 24* (2017), which clarifies state obligations under the ICESCR in the context of business activities.¹⁷⁵ These obligations include adopting legal frameworks that require business entities to exercise human rights due diligence, establishing appropriate monitoring and accountability procedures, and ensuring access to effective remedies when violations occur.¹⁷⁶

¹⁶⁴ United Nations Global Compact. *The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. Principle 6: Labour*. N.d.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations Global Compact. *The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact*. N.d.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations, Department of Operational Support. *Supply Chain Management*. 2015. p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.* p. 2.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966.

¹⁷¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217 A (III))*. 1948.

¹⁷² United Nations, General Assembly. *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/RES/2200 (XXI))*. 1966.

¹⁷³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. 2011.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ United Nations, Economic and Social Council. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. *General comment No. 24 (2017) on State obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the context of business activities*. 2017.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*



The international community has established several key frameworks and initiatives to promote inclusivity and sustainability in global supply chains.¹⁷⁷ The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in General Assembly resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” in 2015, provide an overarching framework, with SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), and SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) being particularly relevant.¹⁷⁸ General Assembly resolution 69/283 (2015) on the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030” also addresses supply chain resilience in the context of disaster preparedness and response.¹⁷⁹ Similarly, the *Paris Agreement* (2015) has created implications for supply chain sustainability, particularly in terms of decarbonization efforts and the promotion of circular economy principles.¹⁸⁰ It emphasizes the need for supply chain practices that support climate change mitigation and adaptation.¹⁸¹

Regional frameworks and agreements focus on global principles to specific geographical contexts and economic realities.¹⁸² The European Union (EU) has taken significant steps in this direction, with the European Parliament approving a new supply chain law in 2024 aimed at holding companies accountable for human rights and environmental standards throughout their global supply chains.¹⁸³ This law represents a major advancement in the EU’s efforts to promote sustainable and responsible business practices.¹⁸⁴ In the Asia-Pacific region, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation implemented a *Supply Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan* in 2017 to enhance regional supply chain performance.¹⁸⁵ The plan focuses on addressing chokepoints in regional supply chains, promoting regulatory cooperation, and strengthening supply chain resilience.¹⁸⁶

Role of the International System

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provides necessary standards and guidance for businesses, governments, and stakeholders to implement sustainable and inclusive practices effectively.¹⁸⁷ The *UNDP Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2025* provides a framework for integrating sustainability principles into UNDP’s procurement practices.¹⁸⁸ This strategy aims to ensure that the procurement of goods, services, and works by UNDP supports environmental

¹⁷⁷ United Nations, General Assembly. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. 2015.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (A/RES/69/283)*. 2015.

¹⁸⁰ Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Paris Agreement*. 2015.

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*

¹⁸² Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. *APEC Supply-Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan 2017-2020: Interim Review of External Indicators*. 2019.

¹⁸³ Human Rights Watch. *EU Parliament Approves Supply Chain Law*. 2024.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. *APEC Supply-Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan 2017-2020: Interim Review of External Indicators*. 2019.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-25*. 2022.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*



sustainability, social responsibility, and economic inclusiveness.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, UNDP has launched initiatives such as the FairBiz project, which promotes fair business practices and responsible supply chains in Member States of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations.¹⁹⁰ The project works to strengthen anti-corruption frameworks, enhance business integrity, and improve transparency in public procurement.¹⁹¹ Through policy advocacy and capacity building, it helps businesses implement ethical practices and comply with international standards while maintaining competitiveness.¹⁹² This project has contributed to policy changes, such as the introduction of article 17A of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, which introduced new management techniques to combat corruption in supply chains.¹⁹³ Through such initiatives, UNDP works directly with governments and businesses to implement practical solutions for more sustainable and inclusive supply chains.¹⁹⁴

Specialized United Nations agencies contribute their expertise to promote sustainability and inclusivity in global supply chains.¹⁹⁵ The World Bank has organized events such as “Finding the Future: Incentivizing Inclusive and Sustainable Supply Chains” to explore innovative financing mechanisms that support sustainable supply chain practices.¹⁹⁶ During this event, held in April 2023, financial experts and development specialists discussed strategies to incentivize responsible business practices, including blended finance solutions that combine public and private capital to increase investment in sustainable projects, and impact investing models that aim to generate measurable social and environmental benefits alongside financial returns.¹⁹⁷ In 2019, the International Labour Organization (ILO), along with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), released the joint report *Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains*.¹⁹⁸ This report identifies key risk factors, including gaps in legislation and enforcement, socio-economic pressures on individuals and workers, and business conduct and environment.¹⁹⁹ It emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach involving governments, businesses, and other stakeholders to address these issues.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, ILO has implemented the Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Supply Chains in Asia project, which focuses on improving labor conditions and promoting decent work in Asian supply chains.²⁰¹ The United Nations Industrial Development Organization supports sustainable supply chains through South-South and triangular industrial cooperation, facilitating knowledge exchange, and capacity building among developing Member States.²⁰² The United Nations Conference on Trade and

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN Global Supply Chains*. 2024.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*

¹⁹² *ibid.*

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ International Labour Organization et al. *Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains: Executive summary*. 2019.

¹⁹⁶ World Bank. *Financing the Future: Incentivizing Inclusive and Sustainable Supply Chains*. 2023.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ International Labour Organization et al. *Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains: Executive summary*. 2019.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*

²⁰¹ International Labour Organization. *Resilient, Inclusive and Sustainable Supply Chains in Asia (RISSC)*. 2024.

²⁰² United Nations Industrial Development Organization. *Supporting Sustainable Supply Chains Through South-South and Triangular Industrial Cooperation*. 2024.



Development (UNCTAD) has also taken a leading role in addressing global supply chain issues.²⁰³ In collaboration with the Government of Barbados, UNCTAD organized the first United Nations Global Supply Chain Forum in 2022.²⁰⁴ Key outcomes of the forum included agreements to improve digital infrastructure, increase support for youth entrepreneurship, and enhance collaboration among small island developing states (SIDS) to strengthen their integration into global supply chains.²⁰⁵ In January 2024, UNCTAD hosted the second Global Supply Chain Forum, which resulted in key commitments to enhance supply chain resilience, including agreements to strengthen digital infrastructure in developing countries, promoting regional cooperation for crisis response, and developing new financing mechanisms for sustainable supply chain transformation.²⁰⁶

International collaboration beyond the United Nations system is central to developing and implementing standards for sustainable and inclusive global supply chains.²⁰⁷ The Group of Seven (G7), consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, launched a sustainable supply chain initiative in 2021.²⁰⁸ This initiative, signed by major food and agriculture companies, aims to enhance sustainability practices and improve accountability within global supply chains.²⁰⁹ The initiative focuses on promoting responsible sourcing, reducing environmental impacts, and ensuring fair business practices throughout supply chains in the food and agriculture sector.²¹⁰ Furthermore, alongside the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has launched initiatives to develop sustainable regional value chains.²¹¹ In 2023, ECOWAS organized a workshop in Dakar, Senegal, bringing together representatives from Member States, regional institutions, and the private sector.²¹² The workshop examined the potential of regional value chains in West Africa under the AfCFTA, aiming to review and improve draft reports, engage stakeholders, and create a roadmap for implementing recommendations.²¹³ These international initiatives provide a comprehensive approach to addressing the economic, social, and environmental aspects of global supply chains, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, sustainability, and responsible business practices.²¹⁴

The international system plays a crucial role in fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders and providing technical assistance to address supply chain challenges.²¹⁵ Public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder initiatives are essential in addressing supply chain challenges.²¹⁶ The United Nations Global Compact is a voluntary initiative that engages businesses, governments, and civil society

²⁰³ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *UN Global Supply Chain Forum calls for resilience amid world trade disruptions*. 2024.

²⁰⁴ *ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *ibid.*

²⁰⁶ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Global Supply Chain Forum*. 2024.

²⁰⁷ Business & Human Rights Resource Center. *G7: Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative launched, signed by major food and agriculture companies*. 2021.

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*

²¹⁰ *ibid.*

²¹¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. *Developing value chains in West Africa to take advantage of the AfCFTA*. 2023.

²¹² *ibid.*

²¹³ *ibid.*

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

²¹⁵ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Keys to Resilient Supply Chains*. N.d.

²¹⁶ *ibid.*



organizations to implement its Ten Principles and align efforts with the broader SDG framework.²¹⁷ These principles cover four key areas: human rights, labor standards, environment, and anti-corruption.²¹⁸ They provide businesses with a value-based framework for developing more sustainable and socially responsible supply chains.²¹⁹ One of its strategic focuses is engaging SMEs for their role in fostering more inclusive and sustainable supply chains.²²⁰ Moreover, OECD has developed the Keys to Resilient Supply Chains.²²¹ These guidelines focus on minimizing exposure to digital security and infrastructure risks, improving risk management, utilizing public-private tools and international instruments, and ensuring transparency.²²² Similarly, OECD and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) jointly developed the OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains, providing a framework for risk-based due diligence and responsible business conduct in the agricultural sector.²²³ This framework includes key elements such as identifying, preventing, and mitigating risks throughout agricultural supply chains, ensuring environmental sustainability, upholding human rights and labor practices, promoting transparency and accountability, and encouraging stakeholder management.²²⁴ Collaboration across these sectors is vital for developing comprehensive approaches to supply chain sustainability, ensuring the inclusion of diverse perspectives and expertise from various stakeholders.²²⁵

Monitoring and reporting on progress are important elements of the international community's efforts towards more inclusive and sustainable supply chains.²²⁶ Mechanisms such as the United Nations Global Compact's annual communication on progress and the International Integrated Reporting Framework allow stakeholders to track advancements and identify areas requiring further attention.²²⁷ This ongoing assessment helps refine strategies and ensures that international efforts remain responsive to evolving challenges in global supply chains.²²⁸ Civil society actors, such as Alliance for Corporate Transparency, play an equally important role by monitoring corporate behavior, advocating for stronger regulations, and raising awareness about supply chain issues.²²⁹ Organizations like the European Coalition for Corporate Justice, a network of civil society organizations advocating for corporate accountability, work for legally binding corporate due diligence in the EU, ensuring companies are held accountable for human rights and environmental impacts through their value chains.²³⁰

²¹⁷ United Nations Global Compact. *The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact*. N.d.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*

²¹⁹ *ibid.*

²²⁰ *ibid.*

²²¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Keys to Resilient Supply Chains*. N.d.

²²² *ibid.*

²²³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development et al. *OECD-FAO Guidance for Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains*. 2016.

²²⁴ *ibid.*

²²⁵ United Nations Global Compact. *The Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact*. N.d.

²²⁶ United Nations Global Compact. *Supply Chain Sustainability: A Practical Guide for Continuous Improvement*. 2015. p. 71.

²²⁷ *ibid.* p. 71.

²²⁸ *ibid.*

²²⁹ European Coalition for Corporate Justice. *Civil society organizations call for meaningful supply chain reporting requirements*. 2021.

²³⁰ *ibid.*



Resilient Supply Chains in Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas

The resilience of supply chains in conflict-affected and high-risk areas is important in maintaining sustainable and inclusive supply chains.²³¹ With the global economic impact of violence reaching \$19.1 trillion in 2023, equivalent to 13.5% of global gross domestic product, strengthening these supply chains is essential to ensure stability.²³² According to OECD, conflict-affected and high-risk areas are regions where armed conflict, widespread violence or other threats to people's safety exist.²³³ During conflicts, companies risk contributing to supply chains involving human rights violations because of unrepresentative governments, systemic discrimination, and mismanagement of revenues.²³⁴ Some of these human rights violations include minimum wage violations, forced overtime, and child labor.²³⁵ Resilient supply chains in these areas are important to avoid further contributions to conflict through procurement practices.²³⁶ SMEs are resilient in conflict-affected areas because fragile states often rely heavily on SME-driven economies.²³⁷ This reliance offers the potential for SMEs to play a key role in fostering peace and stability within these regions.²³⁸

International organizations have provided parameters to increase corporate human rights due diligence in areas of conflict.²³⁹ Due diligence is an ongoing, dynamic process that enables companies to actively and consistently ensure they uphold human rights and avoid contributing to conflict.²⁴⁰ Due diligence can ensure that companies take the necessary steps to identify potential human rights risks and liability.²⁴¹ The UNGPs are a global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of human rights violations.²⁴² Guiding Principle 7, in particular, highlights the continued necessity for businesses to respect human rights in conflict-affected areas.²⁴³ Within this framework, states are encouraged to take proactive measures, such as early-warning systems, reviewing policies, and fostering government-business cooperation.²⁴⁴ Additionally, the UNGPs emphasize the responsibility of both countries where businesses operate and those where they are based to assist companies in addressing breaches, specifically including sexual violence, and hold companies legally accountable for human rights violations.²⁴⁵

²³¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*. 2016.

²³² Institute for Economics and Peace. *Global Peace Index 2024*. 2024.

²³³ Responsible Minerals Initiative. *Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs)*. 2024.

²³⁴ United Nations Global Compact. *Guidance on Responsible Business in conflict-affected and high-risk areas: A Resource for Companies and Investors a Joint UN Global Compact - PRI Publication*. 2010. p. 6.

²³⁵ Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights in Supply Chains*. 2016.

²³⁶ Responsible Minerals Initiative. *Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas (CAHRAs)*. 2024.

²³⁷ Netherlands Institute of International Relations. *Growing or Coping? Evidence from small and medium sized enterprises in fragile settings*. 2016.

²³⁸ *ibid.*

²³⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence for Business in Conflict-Affected Contexts: A Guide*. 20221. p. 4.

²⁴⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*. 2016. p. 13.

²⁴¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence for Business in Conflict-Affected Contexts: A Guide*. 20221. p. 10.

²⁴² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*. 2011.

²⁴³ *ibid.* p. 8.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.* p. 9.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.* p. 10.



Regional organizations have created plans to help stem the trade of goods, specifically the trade of conflict minerals, in conflict-affected and high-risk areas.²⁴⁶ In conflict-affected and high-risk areas, especially companies engaged in mining and mineral trade have a critical role in driving income, economic growth, and local development.²⁴⁷ However, these companies also face the significant risk of being linked to negative impacts, including human rights abuses and perpetuation of conflict.²⁴⁸ Conflict minerals are those that may have been used to finance armed conflict groups or were retrieved using unsustainable labor practices, such as forced labor.²⁴⁹ In January 2021, the EU passed the Conflict Minerals Regulation to ensure human rights abuses are tackled and that armed groups do not continue to benefit from these supply chains.²⁵⁰

Several regions that have experienced years of conflict are now transforming and promoting resilient supply chains.²⁵¹ South Sudan is a highly conflict-affected country that has large agricultural potential but continues to face food insecurities and problems with import dependency due to multiple years of conflict.²⁵² However, after peace talks, trade has been improved through the implementation of better security standards on main roads, increasing the efficiency of the supply chain.²⁵³ Furthermore, the Conflict-Free Sourcing Initiative (CFSI) is a coalition of over 160 companies from various industries that provide resources to help manage conflict minerals in supply chains.²⁵⁴ For instance, it aims to support sustainable peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by promoting responsible sourcing practices and supporting the procurement of conflict-free materials.²⁵⁵ CFSI does this through the implementation of their Conflict-Free Smelter Program, encouraging smelters and refiners of conflict minerals to participate in an auditing process that certifies them as conflict-free, ensuring the materials do not contribute to armed conflict.²⁵⁶

Environmental Risks Along the Supply Chain

Supply chains with poor supply chain management can lead to severe environmental impacts such as toxic waste, water pollution, and hazardous air emissions.²⁵⁷ On average, organizations' supply chain emissions are 11.4 times higher than their operational emissions, equating to 92% of an organization's total greenhouse gas emissions.²⁵⁸ Since the average company has found that emissions within its supply chain are more than ten times as high as its direct emissions, sufficient supply chain management will

²⁴⁶ European Commission. *Conflict Minerals Regulation: the regulation explained*. N.d.

²⁴⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*. 2016. p. 12.

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*

²⁴⁹ European Commission. *Conflict Minerals Regulation: the regulation explained*. N.d.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.*

²⁵¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. *UNECE contributes to advancing resilient and sustainable supply chains in response to disruptions caused by health crises and conflict*. 2022.

²⁵² United Nations Development Programme. *South Sudan Agricultural Value Chain: Challenges and Opportunities*. 2022. p. 13.

²⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 13.

²⁵⁴ Responsible Minerals Initiative. *Conflict-Free Sourcing Initiative Statement on Sourcing from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Adjoining Countries*. 2024.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Ghalekhondabi et al. *Optimal pricing and environmental improvement for a hazardous waste disposal supply chain with emission penalties*. 2020.

²⁵⁸ Carbon Disclosure Project. *Transparency to Transformation: A Chain Reaction*. 2021. p. 5.



have a large impact globally.²⁵⁹ This issue is relevant for SIDS, which face additional environmental vulnerabilities due to their dependence on maritime shipping and limited infrastructure.²⁶⁰ For instance, in the Pacific region, poorly managed waste disposal practices on ships have led to significant ocean pollution, including hazardous materials and plastics, thereby degrading biodiversity.²⁶¹ With maritime shipping responsible for 80% of global trade and 3% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonization and improved waste management in supply chains are essential.²⁶²

UNDP has undertaken several initiatives to address environmental risks along supply chains.²⁶³ The *UNDP Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2025* allows for the incorporation of environmentally sustainable practices in the organization's procurement process.²⁶⁴ These include streamlining procurement across key sectors, using digital tools to make procurement more efficient, and improving procurement skills for UNDP projects and programs.²⁶⁵ The strategy provides procurement solutions that are specifically designed to meet each country's and organization's needs, ensuring sustainable production and consumption.²⁶⁶ These fit-for-purpose procurement solutions are focused on giving client-centered support that allows harmonization with country offices.²⁶⁷ UNDP has integrated environmental and social sustainability into global supply chains through the development of the UNDP Green Commodities Programme, which improves the environmental performance of agricultural commodity sectors and their ability to achieve the SDGs.²⁶⁸ The programme drives sustainable agricultural sector changes by fostering stakeholder cooperation, influencing regulations, and promoting gender balance.²⁶⁹ The UNDP Green Commodities Programme has been working on sustainable cashmere in Mongolia through the creation of the Mongolia Sustainable Cashmere Platform.²⁷⁰ This initiative is addressing challenges such as land degradation, overgrazing, and the need for better pasture management practices in Mongolia.²⁷¹

To reduce the environmental impact of supply chains, international organizations are taking measures to decarbonize shipping.²⁷² Global disruptions are causing ships to spend more time at sea, increasing greenhouse gas emissions and highlighting the growing uncertainty in an interconnected world.²⁷³ In

²⁵⁹ *ibid.* p. 5.

²⁶⁰ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Building resilience in small island developing States*. 2022. p. 8.

²⁶¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Plastic soup, plastics islands: How Small Island Developing States can end plastic pollution*. 2024.

²⁶² United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Global Supply Chain Forum*. 2024.

²⁶³ United Nations Development Programme. *UNDP Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2025*. 2022.

²⁶⁴ *ibid.* p. 3.

²⁶⁵ *ibid.* p. 3.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *ibid.* p. 11.

²⁶⁸ United Nations Development Programme. *Sustainable Cashmere from Mongolia: A Market Assessment*. 2019.

²⁶⁹ United Nations Development Programme. *Green Commodities Programme*. 2024.

²⁷⁰ United Nations Development Programme. *Let's Sit Together To Stand Together: Forcing a mechanism for collective action on Sustainable Cashmere in Mongolia*. 2019.

²⁷¹ *ibid.*

²⁷² International Maritime Organization. *Revised GHG reduction strategy for global shipping adopted*. 2023.

²⁷³ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *UN Global Supply Chain Forum calls for resilience amid world trade disruptions*. 2024.



response, the United Nations Global Supply Chain Forum, in May 2024, emphasized the urgent need for decarbonization within global supply chains.²⁷⁴ SIDS in particular face an increased risk from climate change due to their susceptibility to natural disasters and high levels of dependence on imported fossil fuels.²⁷⁵ Therefore, the United Nations Global Supply Chain Forum called for a strategic focus on SIDS, advocating for a transition to green and sustainable technologies, in order to promote energy efficiency.²⁷⁶ The forum highlighted efforts to incentivize low- or zero-carbon fuels, build new fuel safety regulations, and develop port readiness assessment tools as essential steps towards equipping ports to handle various fuels and ensure increased renewable energy resources.²⁷⁷ The United Nations Global Compact is also working towards decarbonization through an initiative that aims to reduce the maritime sector's greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to 3% of global emissions.²⁷⁸ The program focuses on a “just transition,” ensuring that the shift to zero-emission fuels is equitable, especially for SIDS.²⁷⁹ This includes pilot projects, green corridors, and cross-industry collaborations to reach net-zero shipping emissions by 2050.²⁸⁰

Conclusion

Promoting inclusive and sustainable global supply chains is a critical challenge that requires coordinated action from governments, businesses, international organizations, and civil society.²⁸¹ The frameworks, initiatives, and collaborations established by the international community provide a strong foundation for addressing economic, social, and environmental issues along supply chains.²⁸² However, significant work remains to be done, particularly in conflict-affected areas and in mitigating environmental risks.²⁸³ As supply chains continue to evolve, ongoing efforts are required to ensure they contribute positively to sustainable development and respect for human rights.²⁸⁴ By leveraging public-private partnerships, advancing innovative solutions, and maintaining a focus on transparency and accountability, stakeholders can work together to build more resilient, equitable, and environmentally sound global supply chains that benefit both people and the private sector.²⁸⁵

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*

²⁷⁵ International Renewable Energy Agency. *Small island states at a crossroads: The socio-economics of transitioning to renewables*. 2024.

²⁷⁶ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *UN Global Supply Chain Forum calls for resilience amid world trade disruptions*. 2024.

²⁷⁷ *ibid.*

²⁷⁸ United Nations Global Compact. *Charting a 1.5°C Trajectory for Maritime Transport*. 2021.

²⁷⁹ *ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*

²⁸¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Keys to Resilient Supply Chains*. N.d.

²⁸² United Nations Development Programme. *Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2025*. 2022.

²⁸³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas*. 2016; Ghalekhondabi et al. *Optimal pricing and environmental improvement for a hazardous waste disposal supply chain with emission penalties*. 2020.

²⁸⁴ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *UN Global Supply Chain Forum calls for resilience amid world trade disruptions*. 2024.

²⁸⁵ United Nations Development Programme. *Procurement for Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2025*. 2022.



Further Research

As delegates conduct further research and consider how to address this topic, they should consider: How can UNDP facilitate greater collaboration between the public and private sectors to promote sustainable supply chain practices? How can UNDP support SMEs to build more inclusive and sustainable supply chains? How could UNDP better support conflict-affected and high-risk areas when sustainability and respect for human rights in supply chains are at risk? What can UNDP do to further prevent environmental risks along the supply chain? What new practices can be implemented by Member States internationally to create greener supply chains? How can environmentally sound supply chains be better encouraged throughout Member States?



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