

HISAR SCHOOL

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“Endorsing Accountability: Reapproaching Neglected Urgencies”

Environmental Committee (GA3)

*Making Eco-Friendly Alternatives
Accessible to Individuals in Poverty*

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RESEARCH
REPORT



Forum: Environmental Committee (GA3)

Issue: Making eco-friendly alternatives accessible to individuals in poverty

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Introduction

Eco-friendliness has long been associated with living organisms, though its scope covers a wider spectrum of alternatives. Especially with the emphasis put on improving ecological sustainability by the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the issue has been acknowledged and is currently subject to thought by most Member States. However, poverty has been a significant obstacle in promoting sustainability and implementing eco-friendly solutions to widespread problems such as contamination and energy production. Taking the conference's theme of "Endorsing Accountability: Re-approaching Neglected Urgencies" into consideration, utilizing equitable solutions to rapidly eliminate the catalyzers of common ecological problems has become inevitable.

Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): They are a set of 17 interrelated goals regarding sustainability, calling the UN Member States to urgent action. The SDGs were set in 2015 by the UN General Assembly, and are designed to be met by 2030.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): The FAO is a UN Specialized Agency established in 1945, in order to eliminate famine on a global scale and promote food security. It currently consists of 194 Member States and is actively working in over 130 countries.

Environmentalism: Concern about and action aimed at protecting the environment.

Urbanization: Shift of the residing population from rural areas to the city, which yields negative environmental consequences alongside economic benefits.

General Overview

For decades, the political scene has put the blame on the consumer for lacking environmental consciousness, be it for waste output, energy consumption, or simply the use of plastic. While utilizing public transportation and occasionally switching off the power suffice and even lead to financial savings on a local level, steps such as transitioning to solar energy require notable investments for those in poverty. The UN's sustainable development agenda that was launched in 2015, therefore, aims to reduce poverty to tackle ecological problems while in a better state of welfare. On the other hand, improving

financial welfare is a much broader and effective solution than improving accessibility to eco-friendly alternatives, but rightfully requires major planning, funds, and implementation.

Especially when survival necessities and frequently utilized items are at the risk of not being provided, sustainable alternatives are easily disregarded for their higher prices. Adopting a realistic approach to observe results in a shorter time span, the replacement of everyday items with their eco-friendly counterparts has been in high demand by civil organizations and political entities. A special sensitivity towards sanitation and menstruation products has lately been observed in the world, stemming from their cruciality and frequency of use. A common illustration is the nowadays wider use of reusable menstruation cups to substitute for hygienic pads. Although such examples are one-time financial investments that yield both ecological and monetary gains, they are mostly available in urban environments rather than smaller residencies.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has perhaps been the closest involved body with the issue, working to connect sustainably developed cities with their rural surroundings to establish mutual benefits. These benefits include but have not been limited to agricultural supply chain benefits for the urban population and increased job opportunities for the rural population. With the recent statistics revealing an expected rise in urban population from just over 50% today to 68% by 2050, a larger portion of those in poverty will have already gained access to eco-friendly solutions or sustainability alternatives. For the fraction still deprived of access, there are several sectors like the sustainable fashion industry that have gained popularity and thus, prevalent use.

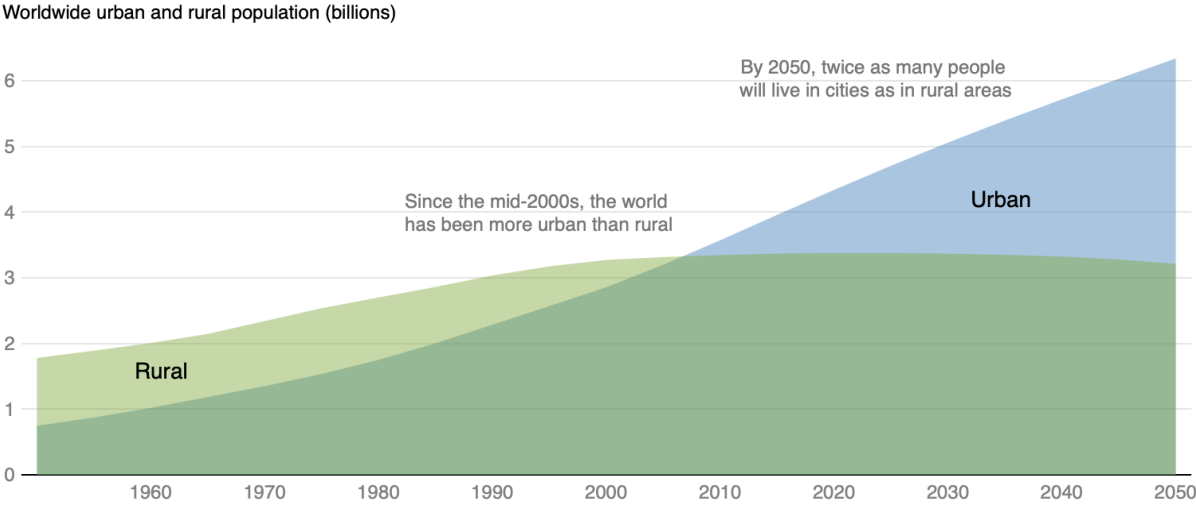


Image 1: The Global Rise of City Dwellers (UN World Urbanization Prospects)

Additionally, it is worth noting that although sustainability and lack of environmental consciousness have long reaching histories, the problems have mostly arisen from speedy urbanization. Today, as developing technology and political awareness is sufficient to tackle urbanization's negative impacts, the problem lies in regions affected by poverty. As much as solutions are easier put into action in developed cities, they are

difficult to implement in unreached territories. This results in a significant gap in governmental measures taken towards tackling this agenda item. Most solutions are carried out by smaller bodies or organizations.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

This UN organ has focused on SDGs 2, 3, and 11, promoting sustainable nutrition and food systems alongside healthy urbanization. In 2019, the FAO has launched the Framework for the Urban Food Agenda, drawing attention to the multi-faceted approach towards eliminating malnutrition and lack of sustainable nutrition in rural regions often swept by poverty. Its current efforts include but are not limited to meeting the 2030 Agenda of achieving sustainable nutrition in all Member States.

World Bank

The World Bank has been concerned with the financial impact of promoting eco-friendly solutions in communities. With the projected climate change progress until 2030, it is estimated that its consequences and natural disasters may cost up to \$314 billion per year. While the UN promotes a shift towards sustainable urbanization to eliminate poverty, the World Bank's estimations indicate that the costly returns of climate change may push 77 million more people into poverty, posing challenges against urbanization goals.

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

The UN DESA is driven by the 2030 Agenda to meet the SDGs. While the main objective is to bring Member States together and translate their political framework into economic and social action, the UN DESA is also involved in the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council's policy-making, raising awareness for sustainability and eradicating poverty.

Finland

According to the 2021 Sustainable Development Report by SDG, Finland is the leading Member State with a score of 85.90 on performance by SDG. This score can be interpreted as an achievement score of all 17 SDGs. However, what stands out is the close margins between the achievement of varying goals. This is evidence to the interwoven positive effects of promoting sustainability not only regarding eco-friendliness, but in the population as well.

Timeline of Events

June 5-16th, 1972	<i>UN Conference on the Human Environment and UNEP</i>
1993	<i>First meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development</i>
2000	<i>Launch of UN Millenium Development Goals</i> Between 2000-2015, one of the primary goals was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
December 12th, 2015	<i>The Paris Agreement</i>
October, 2016	<i>Habitat III Conference</i>

Treaties and Events

Resolution on “The Future We Want”: [A/RES/66/288](#)

The Paris Agreement: It is an international treaty on climate change that legally binds all signing Member States to work in cooperation to limit global warming to ideally below 1.5 Celsius degrees. Every 5 years, new goals and actions are introduced by individual countries. To illustrate, the treaty was signed in 2015, and in 2020, each country introduced its nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the determined goals.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Previous legal action to promote eco-friendly alternatives have been strictly focused on urbanism. However, as urban life is rapidly developing with technological advancements, improved city planning and increased environmental consciousness, the implementation of measures regarding the issue are not so difficult in the city, but are rather a challenge for those in poverty. Little to none political action aimed at the rural and often poor population has been taken yet. Thus, the cruciality of the problem is intensifying, calling for immediate action and change.

Possible Solutions

The SDGs are long-term goals, though they require continuous attention in the short-term as well. Therefore, when aiming to improve accessibility, it is vital that the broader SDGs are kept in mind, and that even short-term solutions contribute to one or more of the 17 goals.

On a daily basis, eco-friendly alternatives may easily be the replacement of daily utilized items. Delegates are encouraged to pay close attention to the nutrition and consumer habits of those in poverty and seek financially appropriate replacements that promote environmentalism. When doing so, it is inevitable that the COVID-19 pandemic and its financial outcomes are taken into consideration, bearing the supply chain disruptions in mind. Thus, cooperating with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is a great way to bypass often overseas supply chains and reduce poverty by supporting local businesses.

Additionally, with the aforementioned rise in urbanization, as even the poor are often obliged to move into the city and are struggling to sustain themselves financially, healthy urbanization is crucial. While the UN and its bodies are working to empower the population as it shifts from rural areas to the city, the consequences should not be disregarded and may serve as a starting point for legislative change.

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