

GOMUN 2026 OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

Study Guide

ECOSOC

Matěj Novotný & Daniel Mana

Released October 2026, 1st Edition

COMMITTEE INTRODUCTION

The Economic and Social Council is at the heart of the United Nations system to advance the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

First Topic: The impact of debt trapping on global development

Matěj Novotný

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Debt trapping has become an increasingly significant issue in international development, where developing countries accumulate unsustainable levels of external debt, often tied to large-scale infrastructure projects or unfavorable loan conditions. This can limit national sovereignty, restrict public spending on essential services, and deepen economic dependence on creditor nations or institutions. While foreign investment and loans can drive development, poorly managed debt risks long-term economic instability. Delegates must examine responsible lending and borrowing practices, transparency in financial agreements, and the role of international financial institutions in preventing debt crises, while ensuring that development financing remains accessible to those in need.

KEY TERMS

Government debt – the money owed by governments to lenders such as its citizens, banks, international institutions, or other governments.

Debt-trap diplomacy – a strategy when a country provides loans to another country with the aim of increasing its influence over that country.

Creditor – country or institution providing a loan to someone.

Debtor – a person, institution or a country borrowing money through a loan.

OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC

With the indebtedness of governments around the world, the issue of debt trapping is a notable topic mostly in regards to poorer developing nations around the world. Debt trapping describes the situation when developed nations use their financial resources to provide loans to a poorer country with the intent of gaining influence and leverage over the country and its government.

The loan agreement between the less developed country and more developed country usually involves plans for specific projects built with the funds provided. Examples can include energetic facilities, road or railway infrastructure, or other investments of similar character. This means that debt-trap loans can be seen by the borrowing country in a similar manner as international economic support, or investments. Because of the specific projects being planned with these loans, the creditor country can essentially make the debtor country procure its domestic suppliers for whatever investment the loan is being used for.

While previously mentioned factors are not inherently negative, the issue comes when considering the conditions for the debt. These conditions, such as interest or collateral may be considerably unfair towards the debtor, in such a way that will assure the creditor country leverage in political matters.

This issue is discussed significantly in relation to the economic situation in Africa. This situation comes in a world which experiences overall rising indebtedness of governments, with the percentage of global average government debt to gdp ratio rising from around 64% in 2001 to 95% in 2026, according to the IMF. This means that debt trapping can cut off income streams of developing economies through seizure of assets, or exploit their worsening debt situation to pursue geopolitical objectives.

Hence, debt-trap diplomacy is a pressing issue that can cause significant damage to global geopolitical and economic stability, and worsen the inequality between developing nations and developed ones by reducing their independence.

TIMELINE OF THE TOPIC

1956 – The Paris Club was created

1976 – The London Club was created

2015 – UN adopted a resolution on sovereign debt restructuring

2017 – Indian academic Brahma Chellaney coins the term debt-trap diplomacy as a description of Chinese foreign policy towards smaller countries.

PAST ACTIONS

The IMF – The International Monetary Fund is an institution established in order to promote economic stability and to support countries in a difficult economic situation with loans.

The Paris Club – The Paris Club is a group of important developed creditor countries that aims to resolve situations when countries become unable to pay their debts. This usually involves renegotiating debt contracts or extending dates of payments in order to reduce stress on the economy of the debtor country.

The London Club – Similar to the Paris Club, the London Club is a group of banks gathering in order to discuss and renegotiate debt that they are owed by countries that are unable to pay.

The resolution on principles for sovereign debt restructuring – A resolution adopted in 2015, meant to provide a clear framework describing the ideal approach of countries towards sovereign debt restructuring. The resolution outlines 9 principles that need to be respected.

COUNTRY POSITIONS

United States of America

The United States of America has long been accusing China of pursuing a strategy of debt-trap diplomacy. The US is also the largest donor to Africa, which is a region significantly affected by the issue of debt trapping. It does not directly loan to other countries such as China, it instead pursues the strategy of foreign aid and grants.

China

China is the country most accused of debt trapping by the international community. The Chinese government presents their loans to African countries and other developing nations as strategic collaborations and economic support. It usually provides countries with loans meant for specific infrastructure that it also then helps develop. Its loans to developing nations are part of a broader strategy called the belt and road initiative which essentially aims to create a “new silk road”.

France

France has historically faced criticism for other forms of financial influence over developing nations, such as monetary traps. It provides a significant amount of aid to developing nations through its official development assistance.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER

- What role should the UN play in terms of evaluating what counts as a form of debt trap?
- How can the UN contribute towards helping countries currently in a debt trap get out of the difficult economic situation?
- How should humanitarian effects of debt traps be addressed and who should be held accountable?
- What framework could the UN implement that would replace debt traps in the role of a source of economic support for developing countries?
- What framework should be used to distinguish between debt-trap diplomacy efforts and international economic support?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the committee should discuss, to what extent is the narrative of debt-trap diplomacy used to describe certain ways of economic cooperation, considering the variety of forms of economic aid to developing nations. While there has been little evidence of material negative outcomes of debt-trapping, such as asset seizures from developing nations, there still exists the issue of countries using debt as leverage to influence a country's foreign policy or receive certain opportunities from that country at its cost. ECOSOC should do all in its power to prevent this from happening.

Second Topic: Tackling increasing economic disparity

Matěj Novotný

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Rising economic inequality, both within and between countries, poses a major challenge to sustainable development and social stability. Factors such as unequal access to education, technological gaps, globalization, and uneven economic growth contribute to widening wealth disparities. This issue affects not only developing nations but also advanced economies, where income inequality can lead to political polarization and reduced social mobility. Delegates are expected to propose policies that promote inclusive growth, such as fair taxation systems, investment in education and healthcare, and international cooperation to reduce global inequality, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

KEY TERMS

Sustainable Development Goals – 17 goals in the sector of sustainable economic development that the UN has set to aim towards achieving in the time between 2015 and 2030.

Economic inequality – unequal distribution of income and opportunity between different groups in society

Political polarization – Ideological divide between political groups

Wealth disparity – The unequal distribution in assets.

Developing nations – Poorer nations with most employment in the primary sector

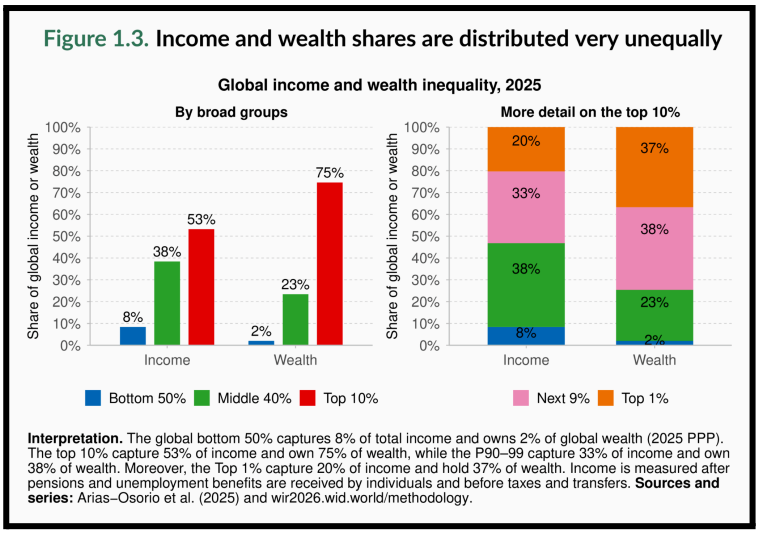
Developed nations – Rich nations with majority of employment in the tertiary sector

OVERVIEW OF THE TOPIC

Throughout history, population growth has been identified as the main driver of economic growth, however, this changed during the 20th century, when the proportional gdp growth per person increased rapidly. However, this increase has been considerably disproportionate in terms of which countries and people experience it. Specifically, the issue of income inequality is a topic discussed significantly throughout the world.

In order to visualise the current situation regarding the inequality of income and, we can use this chart from world inequality report 2026:

As the chart shows, the wealth and income is mostly concentrated in the top 10% of the population in terms of wealth. This also shows that since income is more equally distributed than wealth, the long term savings tend to only exist in the top groups of population on the wealth distribution scale.



Throughout the world, countries have established systems that ensure redistribution of income inside their domestic economy from wealthy groups of people to poorer ones in order to ensure lower inequality of wealth of income. These measures include social security, unemployment benefits, provision of public goods and services, retirement payments, subsidies for public education, or other.

However, this only addresses part of the issue, as governments in countries can not influence global inequality. Global income inequality comes from the difference between developed and developing nations. Generally, in developing nations there are significantly less opportunities to for example pursue entrepreneurship, get education, or get access to high-paying jobs. It is the role of the UN to decide on proper measures to be taken in order to tackle income inequality on global scale.

TIMELINE OF THE TOPIC

1965 - United Nations Development Programme was created

2010 - The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index was launched

January 2016 - The SDGs came into force

December 2017 – The first world inequality report was published at Paris school of Economics.

September 2026 – The International Panel on Inequality was proposed to the UN, as a potential new independent body modelled after the International Panel on Climate Change, that should address the issue of growing economic inequality throughout the world

PAST ACTIONS

The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index – The UNDP established the index to show the global situation regarding poverty.

United Nations Development Programme – An organisation aiming to reduce inequality and poverty currently working in around 170 countries and territories. It aims to help countries achieve the sustainable development goals.

Sustainable Development Goals - These goals serve the world by showing a direction where the international community should head with its efforts of tackling various global issues. They also include several mentions of factors influencing global economic inequality, such as goals “no poverty” or “zero hunger”.

COUNTRY POSITIONS

United States of America

In recent years, the US has pursued a policy more focused on their domestic economic situation. The US therefore wishes to tackle the issues while considering the needs of countries to maintain their own economic situations.

China

China has experienced significant economic growth over the last several decades. This has significantly contributed to getting its population out of poverty and shifted the global distribution of income and wealth favourably to middle class people. Currently, China is pursuing a strategy of helping developing nations and their economies through its Belt and Roads initiative.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION SHOULD ANSWER

- Should the UN aim to ensure equity or equality in its solutions to the issue?
- What international programmes can be established or used to help create opportunities in developing countries?
- To what extent should free international trade be used as a means to promote global economic equality?
- How should the UN prevent the exploitation of the population of developing nations?
- How can the UN ensure that ecologic aspects are considered during the creation of economic opportunities in developing nations?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, global economic inequality is a pressing issue that has been explored only to a limited extent until now with new solutions being proposed, but not many existing yet on the global level. ECOSOC should come up with ways to address global economic inequality while considering questions such as the role of international trade in its reduction or how to promote economic development while maintaining environmental sustainability in developing nations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY / REFERENCES (BOTH TOPICS)

1. https://wir2026.wid.world/insight/global-economic-inequity/
2. https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/820120
3. https://www.imf.org/en/about/faq/sovereign-debt
4. https://unctad.org/news/united-nations-general-assembly-adopts-basic-principles-sovereign-debt-restructuring
5. https://wir2026.wid.world/insight/executive-summary/
6. https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/
7. https://hdr.undp.org/content/2026-global-multidimensional-poverty-inde
8. https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal10

This is the end of the document.