



**SRMUN ATLANTA 2021**  
***Fostering Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership***  
**November 18 - 20, 2021**  
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Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2021 and the Group of 77 (G-77). My name is Marisa Laudadio-Weaver, and I will be serving as your Director for the G-77. This will be my third conference as a SRMUN staff member. Previously, I served as Assistant Director for the Commission on the Status of Women at SRMUN Atlanta 2020 and Assistant Director for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at SRMUN Charlotte 2021. I graduated from Mississippi State University in May 2020 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Communications, with a concentration in Public Relations and a minor in Spanish. Our committee's Assistant Director is Iman Mohamed. This is Iman's first year serving as an Assistant Director at SRMUN Atlanta. Iman is currently enrolled in a dual-degree program at her university where she is pursuing a Bachelor and Master of Arts in Political Science with a concentration in International Relations and a minor in Arabic.

Established in 1964, the G-77 acts to strengthen its 134 Member States' joint negotiating power within the United Nations, increase cooperation for development, and promote collective economic interests of and among countries of the Global South. The G-77's mandate to enhance its Member States' economic standing manifests in many ways, from addressing lack of access to education and financial institutions to increasing affordable healthcare and job opportunities for all genders and ages.

By focusing on the mission of the G-77 and the SRMUN Atlanta 2021 theme of "*Fostering Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership*," we have developed the following topics for delegates to discuss at conference:

- I. Addressing Economic Barriers to Accessible and Quality Health Care in Developing Member States
- II. Promoting Youth Employment and Opportunity in a Post-Pandemic Economy

The background guide provides a strong introduction to the committee and topics that will be debated at SRMUN Atlanta 2021. It should be utilized as a foundation for a delegate's independent research. However, while we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit [srmun.org](http://srmun.org). **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 29, 2021, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website in order to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.**

Iman and I are enthusiastic about serving as your dais for the G-77. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you soon. Please feel free to contact Rachael, Iman, or myself if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

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## Committee History of the Group of 77

The Group of 77 (G-77) was established on June 15, 1964, by 77 developing Member States who signed the Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Developing Countries, released at the conclusion of the first session of the Geneva Summit of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).<sup>1</sup> During G-77's first Ministerial Meeting in Algeria, from October 10-25, 1967, the Charter of Algiers was adopted, which officially solidified G-77 with a permanent organizational structure.<sup>2</sup> The Charter of Algiers also instituted G-77's liaison offices in Geneva, Nairobi, Paris, Rome, Vienna, and Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup> Each liaison office focuses on a specific subject area and coordinates with a different United Nations (UN) agency in accordance with G-77's goals.<sup>4</sup> The office in Geneva, for example, works with UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization (WTO), focusing on initiatives involving trade, development, and investment, while the Nairobi office focuses on environmental issues with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat).<sup>5</sup>

Although G-77 is now comprised of 134 Member States, the original name remains because of its historic relevance.<sup>6</sup> The G-77 includes Member States such as China, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, making it the largest intergovernmental coalition of developing Member States within the UN.<sup>7</sup> The G-77 provides a mechanism for Member States of the Global South to express and advance their mutual economic interests, improve their joint negotiating capability on major international economic issues within the UN's framework, "and promote South-South cooperation for development."<sup>8</sup> The G-77 was established as a result of developing Member States' mutual understanding that they faced similar barriers to advancement and needed collective actions in line with the principles of the UN Charter to counteract the imbalance of economic integration they encountered.<sup>9</sup>

As the highest political unit within the G-77, the Chairmanship position circulates on a regional level among Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean, and is occupied for one year.<sup>10</sup> Currently, the Republic of Guinea occupies the Chairmanship in New York for the year 2021.<sup>11</sup> The South Summit is the ultimate decision-making entity within the G-77, and the first and second South Summits were convened in Havana, Cuba, in April, 2000 and Doha, Qatar, in June 2005.<sup>12</sup> The Declaration of the First South Summit mandates that developing Member States be given high-priority "to overcome underdevelopment," while calling on all Member States to take an equitable approach toward strengthening developing economic systems.<sup>13</sup> The Declaration of the First South Summit also adopted the Havana Programme of Action in 2000, an action-oriented framework for the G-77 Member States to ensure the implementation of initiatives and further expand South-South cooperation.<sup>14</sup>

The Annual Conference of the Ministers for International Affairs of the Group of 77 is conducted at the commencement of the regular session of the UN General Assembly (GA) in New York.<sup>15</sup> Sectoral Ministerial Meetings in preparation for UNCTAD sessions and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization General Conferences

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<sup>1</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77, <http://www.g77.org/doc/index.html> (Accessed January 31, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> "HISTORY," The Group of 77, <http://www.g77.org/vienna/history-2/> (Accessed January 31, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>4</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>5</sup> "G-77 Chapter Inaugurates Its Liaison Office," *Journal of the Group of 77*, no. 2 (1998), <http://www.g77.org/nc/journal/2-98/14.htm> (Accessed February 28, 2021).

<sup>6</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>7</sup> "The Member States of the Group of 77," The Group of 77, <https://www.g77.org/doc/members.html> (Accessed February 7, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>9</sup> "Origin of the Group of 77," The Group of 77, <http://www.g77.org/paris/history/establishment-of-g77.html> (Accessed January 31, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>11</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>12</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>13</sup> "Group of 77 South Summit," The Group of 77, April 14, 2000, [https://www.g77.org/summit/Declaration\\_G77Summit.htm](https://www.g77.org/summit/Declaration_G77Summit.htm) (Accessed February 6, 2021).

<sup>14</sup> "Group of 77 South Summit," The Group of 77.

<sup>15</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

(UNESCO) are held on a periodic basis.<sup>16</sup> In some cases, Special Ministerial Meetings can be called, such as during the G-77's 25th anniversary (Caracas, 1989), 30th anniversary (New York, 1994), and 40th anniversary (São Paulo, 2004).<sup>17</sup> Starting in 1995, the G-77 has carried out Ministerial Meetings specific to certain fields and sectors "in order to pursue South-South cooperation."<sup>18</sup>

Established in 1981 by the G-77 in the Caracas Programme of Action (CPA), the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on South-South Cooperation (IFCC) holds meetings every two years in order to examine and review any growth made in the effective application of the CPA and Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (ECDC).<sup>19</sup> The IFCC operates as a plenary body comprised of senior officials who are supported by the subsidiary structure of core assistants to the G-77 Chairman, the Committee of Experts of the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for ECDC/Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), the General Conference and Steering Committee of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Group of 77, Action Committees, and National Focal Points for ECDC.<sup>20</sup> The IFCC has convened 12 times, with the most recent being in 2008 in Cote D'Ivoire.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to resolutions and decisions, the G-77 also institutes "joint declarations, action programmes, and agreements on development issues" within the UN.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, the G-77 provides statements for various major committees such as the UNGA, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and other subsidiary bodies.<sup>23</sup> One of the G-77's major accomplishments was successfully advocating for the adoption of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) in May 1974 during the UNGA's Sixth Special Session in Algeria.<sup>24</sup> The G-77 saw the establishment of the NIEO as essential to ensuring an economic order that fostered equality among all developed and developing economies and emphasized multilateral cooperation, interdependence, and common interest.<sup>25</sup> Some of the NIEO's demands included full sovereignty over natural resources for Member States, a reform of the international monetary system, assistance for industrialization, and the promotion of South-South cooperation.<sup>26</sup>

The G-77's initiatives are funded by donations from Member States in accordance with decisions made during South Summit meetings.<sup>27</sup> In 1983, the UNGA developed the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation (PGTF) as a medium to improve economic and technical cooperation between developing Member States.<sup>28</sup> Funds are channeled through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) following approval from the G-77.<sup>29</sup> Through the UNGA's resolution 38/201, the PGTF brought forth the liquidation of the UN Emergency Operation Trust Fund and allocated the remainder of its balance to the G-77.<sup>30</sup> The PGTF specifically finances projects that address areas of concern to the Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries and the Havana Action Programme on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Nations, including issues of crucial importance to the G-77 members.<sup>31</sup> The UN Office for South-South Cooperation acts as the PGTF fund manager and, with the approval of the G-77, the UNDP works to incorporate PGTF assets across projects

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<sup>16</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>17</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77, <http://www.g77.org/doc/index.html> (Accessed January 31, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>19</sup> "Draft Agenda," The Group of 77, <https://www.g77.org/ifcc11/agendab.html> (Accessed February 7, 2021).

<sup>20</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>21</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>22</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>23</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 3201, *Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order*, A/RES/3201(S-VI), May 1, 1974, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/218450?ln=en>.

<sup>25</sup> Karl P. Sauvart, "The Early Days of the Group of 77," *UN Chronicle* 51, no. 1 (2014): 27-33, <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/journals/15643913/51/1/9> (Accessed February 28, 2021).

<sup>26</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 3201.

<sup>27</sup> "About the Group of 77," The Group of 77.

<sup>28</sup> "Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)," United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, <http://www.g77.org/pgtf/> (Accessed February 7, 2021).

<sup>29</sup> "Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)," United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

<sup>30</sup> "Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)," United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

<sup>31</sup> "Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)," United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

around the world.<sup>32</sup> The PTGF aims to support developing Member States carrying out projects that reinforce regional cooperation and cross-border economic interests.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> “Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF),” United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

<sup>33</sup> “Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF),” United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

## I. Addressing Economic Barriers to Accessible and Quality Healthcare in Developing Member States

### *Introduction*

The ability to access essential health services is not only a fundamental prerequisite for Member States to fully achieve the United Nations' (UN) 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but also to tackle the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, many developing Member States continue to face persistent economic and financial obstacles in their efforts to expand access to quality healthcare.<sup>35</sup> Throughout much of the developing world, poverty-stricken and vulnerable populations encounter weak health infrastructures that lack the basic resources needed to provide health services such as medical equipment, drugs, and sanitation.<sup>36</sup> Studies estimate that 30 percent of the world still lacks access to essential medical drugs such as anti-retroviral, diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus vaccines, and vitamin supplements, with 50 percent of that group being located in Asia and Africa.<sup>37</sup> In addition to a substantial deficit of well-financed healthcare systems in developing Member States, a significant percentage of populations in developing regions remain at high risk of contracting diseases that could be financially prevented.<sup>38</sup> Significant disparities between developed and developing healthcare systems continue to grow as the SDG's 2030 deadline nears and COVID-19 claims many lives.<sup>39</sup>

### *History*

Economic barriers to accessible and quality healthcare in developing Member States are not a new phenomenon. Previously, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were ratified in the 2000 Millennium Declaration, prioritized vital health issues such as reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, and improving maternal health.<sup>40</sup> The MDGs propelled health issues to the forefront of global policymaking.<sup>41</sup> Still, these efforts only focused on mitigating health issues at hand and not on developing the economies of low and middle-income countries (LMICs) who struggle with providing access to healthcare at the infrastructural level.<sup>42</sup> Many populations in the developing world suffer from preventable health crises that could be solved with access to health resources.<sup>43</sup> Historically, LMIC health systems such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa have been fragile, lacking the basic means of operations such as skilled and trained health workers, adequate health infrastructure, and access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and drugs.<sup>44</sup> Specifically, developing Member States still face several economic shortcomings in their quest to achieve health-related SDGs like Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being.<sup>45</sup>

In 1990, the Commission on Health Research and Development adopted the term "10/90 gap," which refers to the stark disparities of health research between developing and developed Member States, despite developing regions

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<sup>34</sup> "Home: Sustainable Development," Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <https://sdgs.un.org/> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>35</sup> "Tracking Universal Healthcare Coverage: 2017 Global Monitoring Report," WHO and The World Bank, <http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/640121513095868125/pdf/122029-WP-REVISED-PUBLIC.pdf> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>36</sup> Philip Stevens, "Diseases of Poverty and the 10/90 Gap," *International Policy Network*, 2004, [https://sarpn.org/documents/d0002617/6-Disease\\_Poverty\\_IPN\\_2007.pdf](https://sarpn.org/documents/d0002617/6-Disease_Poverty_IPN_2007.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> Philip Stevens, "Diseases of Poverty and the 10/90 Gap."

<sup>38</sup> Philip Stevens, "Diseases of Poverty and the 10/90 Gap."

<sup>39</sup> "Tackling Inequality: A New Social Contract for a New Era," UN, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/tackling-inequality-new-social-contract-new-era> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>40</sup> "The United Nations Millennium Development Goals," UN, <https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>41</sup> "The United Nations Millennium Development Goals," UN.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret Chan, "Health and the MDGs: The Challenges Ahead," UN Chronicles, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/health-and-mdgs-challenges-ahead> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>43</sup> Philip Stevens, "Diseases of Poverty and the 10/90 Gap."

<sup>44</sup> Melody Okereke, et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Healthcare in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Current Evidence and Future Recommendations," *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management* 36, no. 1 (2021): 13-17, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/hpm.3067>.

<sup>45</sup> "World Health Statistics 2020: Monitoring Health for SDGs," WHO, <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332070/9789240005105-eng.pdf> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

accounting for almost 90 percent of the world's disease and poor health.<sup>46</sup> This led to the establishment of the Health Forum under the World Health Organization (WHO), a body dedicated to health research and equity with a focus on poor and marginalized populations.<sup>47</sup> The WHO has not only highlighted the gradual improvements in the execution of health-related SDGs but also emphasized the undeniable inequalities that exist amongst LMIC Member States' access to equitable healthcare.<sup>48</sup> This is mainly due to the inability to fund enhancements in healthcare systems and the financial burden associated with paying out-of-pocket health expenses in LMIC communities.<sup>49</sup> More recently, COVID-19 has thrown these disparities into stark relief and made the need to build resilient health infrastructure in developing Member States more urgent.<sup>50</sup>

During the UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis in 2018, the Group of 77 (G-77) and China urged Member States to increase their efforts in eradicating tuberculosis by investing in research and development as a means to providing affordable, equitable, and efficient medicine and health technologies to tackle tuberculosis.<sup>51</sup> More importantly, the G-77 and China highlighted the USD 1.3 Billion research gap in tuberculosis research.<sup>52</sup> It is noteworthy that eight G-77 Member States, including Indonesia, the Philippines, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, Bangladesh, and China, accounted for 87 percent of the world's tuberculosis burden, and eradicating tuberculosis remains one of the core health targets of the 2030 SDGs.<sup>53</sup>

### ***Current Situation***

Before the spread of COVID-19 in LMIC regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, it was estimated that 70 percent of global diseases were found in LMIC Member States, but only 15 percent of global health spending was going to these regions.<sup>54</sup> As the pandemic continues to impact not only LMIC health systems but also developed Member States, COVID-19 has been exacerbating pre-existing health challenges between the two groups, such as Ebola, Zika virus, and the H1N1 pandemic.<sup>55</sup> The mitigation of COVID-19 requires advanced efforts that LMIC Member States often are not capable of producing, such as contact tracing, COVID-19 testing capacities, physical distance measures, and even proper sanitation.<sup>56</sup>

Currently, COVID-19 is impacting three critical health sectors in LMICs — the pharmaceutical, clinical, and hospital services.<sup>57</sup> The delivery of vital pharmaceutical supplies has stalled in LMIC regions as drug supply, availability, and affordability have been drastically reduced.<sup>58</sup> The surge of patients suffering from COVID-19 and its complications has disrupted hospital and clinical services, forcing them to delay or cancel vital procedures

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<sup>46</sup> Dharmapuri Vidyasagar, "Global Notes: The 10/90 Gap Disparities in Global Health Research," *Journal of Perinatology* 26, no. 1 (2006): 55-56, <https://www.nature.com/articles/7211402#citeas>.

<sup>47</sup> "Global Forum for Health Research," WHO, Global Health Workforce Alliance, [https://www.who.int/workforcealliance/members\\_partners/member\\_list/gfhr/en/](https://www.who.int/workforcealliance/members_partners/member_list/gfhr/en/) (Accessed June 24, 2021).

<sup>48</sup> "World Health Statistics 2020: Monitoring Health for SDGs," WHO, <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332070/9789240005105-eng.pdf> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>49</sup> "World Health Statistics 2020: Monitoring Health for SDGs," WHO.

<sup>50</sup> "World Health Statistics 2020: Monitoring Health for SDGs," WHO.

<sup>51</sup> "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hala Zayed, Minister of Health and Population of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on Behalf of the Group of 77 And China, at the High Level Meeting United To End Tuberculosis: An Urgent Global Response To A Global Epidemic," G-77, September 26, 2018, <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=180926>.

<sup>52</sup> "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hala Zayed, Minister of Health and Population of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on Behalf of the Group of 77 And China, at the High Level Meeting United To End Tuberculosis: An Urgent Global Response To A Global Epidemic," G-77.

<sup>53</sup> "Tuberculosis," WHO, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis> (Accessed June 24, 2021).

<sup>54</sup> Pablo Gottret and George Schieber, "Health Financing Revisited: A Practitioner's Guide," The World Bank, 2006, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/874011468313782370/Health-financing-revisited-a-practitioners-guide>.

<sup>55</sup> Melody Okereke, et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Healthcare in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Current Evidence and Future Recommendations," *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management* 36, no. 1 (2021): 13-17, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/hpm.3067>.

<sup>56</sup> Melody Okereke, et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Healthcare in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Current Evidence and Future Recommendations."

<sup>57</sup> Melody Okereke, et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Healthcare in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Current Evidence and Future Recommendations."

<sup>58</sup> Melody Okereke, et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Healthcare in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Current Evidence and Future Recommendations."

unrelated to COVID-19 and ration PPE, thereby leaving some patients unprotected and depleting the capacities of already beleaguered emergency services.<sup>59</sup> In the wake of COVID-19, many developed Member States with access to advanced technologies began utilizing telemedicine as a replacement for in-person visits, an option many developing healthcare systems are not granted.<sup>60</sup> A 2021 study on telemedicine performance in Sub-Saharan Africa revealed the most robust barriers to telehealth services in the region were financial, such as the high cost of telemedicine and information, communication, and technology (ICT) infrastructure, high cost of electrical supply, and high tariffs on telecommunication and import duties.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to COVID-19 jeopardizing the development rate of health systems and access to healthcare in LMIC regions, least-developed Member States are faced with extreme unpreparedness and vulnerability.<sup>62</sup> The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that for every 10,000 people, a least-developed Member State only had seven hospital beds, 2.5 physicians, and six nurses, compared to 55 hospital beds, over 30 physicians, and 81 nurses in developed Member States.<sup>63</sup> Though COVID-19 is an immediate issue, poverty levels and socioeconomic indicators within LMIC regions continue to open new dimensions of inequity to health access.<sup>64</sup> Many of the concerns facing developing healthcare systems today can be traced back to the deep-rooted structural deficiencies within the methods and efforts employed by developing Member States and international aid organizations which focus on diminishing urgent health crises rather than enhancing existing public health sectors for long-term performance.<sup>65</sup> For example, despite worldwide attention and campaigns to eradicate HIV/AIDS, Africa still has 63 percent of infections with only ten percent of the world's population, highlighting both the structural inequities and the deficiencies in the world's efforts to help.<sup>66</sup>

#### *Case Study: India's Healthcare Response to COVID-19*

Since the detection of COVID-19 in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, health systems across the globe have been forced to grapple with the sudden shift of medical demands in their respective Member States. The Republic of India's healthcare infrastructure has been particularly strained by the disease and its impacts.<sup>67</sup> During the early periods of the pandemic, India's national health system managed to maintain stable rates of mortality and morbidity, despite the gradual rise of COVID-19 cases.<sup>68</sup> This can be credited to the imposition of a national lockdown which decreased transmission of COVID-19 at the expense of thousands of migrant workers from rural provinces returning to their villages, placing them in unemployment and financially vulnerable positions.<sup>69</sup> The mass displacement of

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<sup>59</sup> Melody Okereke, et al., "Impact of COVID-19 on Access to Healthcare in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Current Evidence and Future Recommendations," *The International Journal of Health Planning and Management* 36, no. 1 (2021): 13-17, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/hpm.3067>.

<sup>60</sup> Allison Marin, "Telemedicine Takes Center Stage in the Era of COVID-19," *Science and AAAS*, November 6, 2020, <https://www.sciencemag.org/features/2020/11/telemedicine-takes-center-stage-era-covid-19>.

<sup>61</sup> Joana Eva Dodoo, Hosam Al-Samarraie, and Ahmed Ibrahim Alzahrani, "Telemedicine Use In Sub-Saharan Africa: Barriers and Policy Recommendations for Covid-19 and Beyond," *International Journal of Medical Informatics* 151 (2021), [https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1386505621000939?casa\\_token=iCT7sUPtItYAAAAA:ENnUEbaBEY9bzLh47JoDbtG7bhckaazjEtHE4CoY1ExNvSP6nyN-gd3sepbkoJSfkUL4es8y8fo](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1386505621000939?casa_token=iCT7sUPtItYAAAAA:ENnUEbaBEY9bzLh47JoDbtG7bhckaazjEtHE4CoY1ExNvSP6nyN-gd3sepbkoJSfkUL4es8y8fo).

<sup>62</sup> "COVID-19: New UNDP Data Dashboards Reveal Huge Disparities Among Countries in Ability to Cope and Recover," UNDP, <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/covid-19-new-undp-data-dashboards-reveal-huge-disparities-among-countries-ability> (Accessed April 12, 2021).

<sup>63</sup> "COVID-19: New UNDP Data Dashboards Reveal Huge Disparities Among Countries in Ability to Cope and Recover," UNDP.

<sup>64</sup> "COVID-19: New UNDP Data Dashboards Reveal Huge Disparities Among Countries in Ability to Cope and Recover," UNDP.

<sup>65</sup> Edlyne Eze Anugwom, "Introductory Chapter: Public Health Afflictions and Challenges in the Developing World," *Public Health Afflictions and Challenges in Developing Countries-Challenges and Opportunities*, IntechOpen (2020), <https://www.intechopen.com/books/public-health-in-developing-countries-challenges-and-opportunities/introductory-chapter-public-health-afflictions-and-challenges-in-the-developing-world>.

<sup>66</sup> Edlyne Eze Anugwom, "Introductory Chapter: Public Health Afflictions and Challenges in the Developing World."

<sup>67</sup> Suneela Garg, et al., "Strengthening Public Healthcare Systems in India: Learning Lessons in COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care* 9, no. 12 (2020): 5853-5857, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7928139/>.

<sup>68</sup> Suneela Garg, et al., "Strengthening Public Healthcare Systems in India: Learning Lessons in COVID-19 Pandemic."

<sup>69</sup> Efrat Shadmi, et al., "Health Equity and COVID-19: Global Perspectives," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 19, no. 1 (2020): 1-16, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7316580/>.

low-income populations and the effects of COVID-19 on India's national economy further exaggerated COVID-related complications, such as loss of income, shortage of food and nutrition, and a lack of access to basic medicines.<sup>70</sup>

The pandemic has discontinued several essential health services across India, including immunization clinics and outpatient departments, which has led to the rapid increase in mortality rates, both from COVID-related deaths and deaths caused by preventable diseases.<sup>71</sup> Despite being the second most-populated country in the world, only 1.5 percent of India's gross-domestic product (GDP) is directed towards national health expenditures.<sup>72</sup> The deficit in financial investment of public health systems in India, in tandem with the high cost of private healthcare services, paved the way for a collapse in healthcare services when the second wave of COVID-19 reached India in early 2021.<sup>73</sup> As an LMIC, India faces sharp disparities compared to developed Member States, many of which have also experienced severe challenges in mitigating COVID-19 due to the strain placed on their critical health infrastructure.<sup>74</sup> The second wave of the pandemic has led to the total collapse of the Indian healthcare system.<sup>75</sup> India's hospitals now lack adequate access to oxygen supplies, medicine, and beds, as more than 300,000 COVID-19 cases are reported every day, with approximately 2,500-3,000 deaths happening daily.<sup>76</sup> Overall, India's encounter with COVID-19 has not only highlighted the underlying imbalances present in the developing healthcare systems but also the importance of strengthening existing healthcare systems in the country.<sup>77</sup>

### *Actions Taken by the United Nations*

In 2015, the UN passed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including SDG 3: Ensure Healthy Lives and Promote Well-Being for All People.<sup>78</sup> SDG 3 includes several key indicators related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and overall economic barriers to accessible healthcare.<sup>79</sup> These indicators include achieving universal health coverage, implementing financial risk protection, increasing access to quality essential healthcare services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines, and vaccines for all.<sup>80</sup> Under SDG 3, substantial progress has been made, such as reduction in child and maternal mortality rates, increase in global life expectancy rates, and the successful fight against several infectious diseases around the world such as measles, diphtheria, and tuberculosis.<sup>81</sup> In 2017, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) held a high-level meeting stressing the importance of universal health coverage (UHC) and its role as a necessary human right.<sup>82</sup> Member States passed resolution A/RES/72/139, which urged Member States to work diligently towards the expansion of UHC while, "ensuring that the use of such services and medicines does not expose the users to financial hardship, with a specific emphasis on the poor, vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population."<sup>83</sup>

In 2017, the UNDP adopted the *UNDP Strategic Plan for 2018-2021*, which is guided by the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals in pursuit of mitigating the impacts of poverty in developing Member States at the

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<sup>70</sup> Efrat Shadmi, et al., "Health Equity and COVID-19: Global Perspectives," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 19, no. 1 (2020): 1-16, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7316580/>.

<sup>71</sup> Suneela Garg, et al., "Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan," WHO, February 4, 2020, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/strategic-preparedness-and-response-plan-for-the-new-coronavirus>.

<sup>72</sup> Suneela Garg, et al., "Strengthening Public Healthcare Systems in India: Learning Lessons in COVID-19 Pandemic."

<sup>73</sup> Suneela Garg, et al., "Strengthening Public Healthcare Systems in India: Learning Lessons in COVID-19 Pandemic."

<sup>74</sup> Mahaveer Golechha, "India Should Ramp Up Its Emergency Medicine and Critical Care Infrastructure to Combat COVID-19," *Postgraduate Medical Journal* 97, (2021): 266-267, <https://pmj.bmj.com/content/97/1146/266>.

<sup>75</sup> Mahaveer Golechha, "India Should Ramp Up Its Emergency Medicine and Critical Care Infrastructure to Combat COVID-19."

<sup>76</sup> Erin Schumacher, "A 'Complete Collapse' of Preventative Health: How India's Second Wave Exploded," *abc News*, April 29, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/complete-collapse-preventive-health-indias-2nd-covid-wave/story?id=77316993>.

<sup>77</sup> Mahaveer Golechha, "India Should Ramp Up Its Emergency Medicine and Critical Care Infrastructure to Combat COVID-19."

<sup>78</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 70, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, October 21, 2015, [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E).

<sup>79</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 70.

<sup>80</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 70.

<sup>81</sup> "SDG Indicators," Department of Social and Economic Affairs: Statistics Division, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/goal-03/> (Accessed April 13, 2021).

<sup>82</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 72, *Global Health and Foreign Policy: Addressing the Health of the Most Vulnerable for an Inclusive Society*, A/RES/72/139, January 15, 2018, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/72/139>.

<sup>83</sup> United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 72.



structural level and enhancing sustainable development efforts to establish resilient systems across every sector.<sup>84</sup> This plan focuses on reducing inequalities which increase HIV and poor health, promoting effective and inclusive governance for health, and building resilient and sustainable health systems.<sup>85</sup> Alongside its strategic plan for 2018-2021, the UNDP implemented the *HIV, Health, and Development Strategy for 2016-2021*, which focuses on supporting developing nations in addressing socio-economic challenges that impact health, such as poverty, inequality, housing, and labor.<sup>86</sup> The UNDP is actively implementing these strategies to accelerate the accomplishment of health-related SDGs by 2030 and accentuate the close linkage between poverty and health.<sup>87</sup>

The G-77 has a stable record of supporting health-related initiatives dedicated to improving the efficiency of health systems in developing Member States, including its response to global pandemics.<sup>88</sup> During the UN High-Level Meeting on Tuberculosis in 2018, the G-77 and China emphasized their commitment to supporting developing Member States in tackling the tuberculosis pandemic, stressing the importance of alleviating financial burdens on developing health systems.<sup>89</sup> The G-77 and China highlighted the requirement of increased financial support and resources for developing Member States in order to effectively control the tuberculosis pandemic and achieve the 2030 SDGs.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the G-77 and China further stressed the urgent need for an expansion of access to healthcare affordability, medical tools, new medicines, vaccines, and diagnostics.<sup>91</sup>

When COVID-19 was officially declared a pandemic in March 2020, the WHO launched the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, a series of strategic action plans for Member States to use towards handling COVID-19 and created a global donation fund for COVID-related public health initiatives.<sup>92</sup> The Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan is dedicated to increasing COVID-relief and health services in low capacity and humanitarian environments, specifically LMIC regions that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic at the functional level.<sup>93</sup> The Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan has begun implementing the Accelerator Health Systems Connector, which provides developing health systems with a framework to enhance global health partnerships and investment with the aim of achieving long-term effectiveness.<sup>94</sup>

In March 2020, the G-77 and China asserted their full support for WHO's efforts towards tackling COVID-19 and further stressed the necessity for a cooperative and multilateral response from all Member States.<sup>95</sup> In November 2020, the G-77 acknowledged the heightened developmental barriers vulnerable populations are facing in light of COVID-19, specifically issues that included frail health systems, increased poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition, insufficient financing and high debt levels, inadequate market access for goods and services, and restrictions in accessing needed pharmaceuticals and medical supplies.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> "UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021," UNDP, UN Population Fund, and UN Office for Project Services, November 28, 2017, <http://undocs.org/DP/2017/38>.

<sup>85</sup> "UNDP's Mandate for Health and Development," UNDP, <https://www.undp-capacitydevelopment-health.org/en/about-us/undps-mandate-for-health-and-development/> (Accessed May 13, 2021).

<sup>86</sup> "HIV, Health and Development Strategy 2016-2021," UNDP, September 10, 2019, <https://www.undp.org/publications/hiv-health-and-development-strategy-2016-2021>.

<sup>87</sup> "HIV, Health and Development Strategy 2016-2021," UNDP.

<sup>88</sup> David Branigan, "G77+China Plan to Take UN TB Declaration Forward: Increased Resources, Access To Medicine," Intellectual Property Watch, October 19, 2018, <https://www.ip-watch.org/2018/10/19/g77china-plan-take-un-tb-declaration-forward-increased-resources-access-medicines/>.

<sup>89</sup> "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hala Zayed, Minister of Health and Population of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on Behalf of the Group of 77 And China, at the High Level Meeting United To End Tuberculosis: An Urgent Global Response To A Global Epidemic," G-77, September 26, 2018, <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=180926>.

<sup>90</sup> "Statement by H.E. Dr. Hala Zayed, Minister of Health and Population of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on Behalf of the Group of 77 And China, at the High Level Meeting United To End Tuberculosis: An Urgent Global Response To A Global Epidemic," G-77.

<sup>91</sup> David Branigan, "G77+China Plan to Take UN TB Declaration Forward: Increased Resources, Access To Medicine."

<sup>92</sup> "Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan," WHO, February 4, 2020, <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/strategic-preparedness-and-response-plan-for-the-new-coronavirus>.

<sup>93</sup> "Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan," WHO.

<sup>94</sup> "Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan," WHO.

<sup>95</sup> "G77, China Voice Support for WHO Amid Pandemic," National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, [http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-04/22/c\\_79502.htm](http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-04/22/c_79502.htm) (Accessed April 12, 2021).

<sup>96</sup> "Ministerial Declaration," G-77, <https://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2020.htm> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

## Conclusion

The UN is undeniably making substantial progress in pursuit of SDG 3 and all other socioeconomic-related SDGs, while further aiding developing Member States' access to healthcare and alleviating COVID-19 across the globe.<sup>97</sup> While income inequality is gradually decreasing around the world, larger disparities between developed and developing Member States within these rates of progress continue to grow.<sup>98</sup> For example, the average income of populations living within the European Union is eleven-times higher than that of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>99</sup> Global inequality and health inequity are closely related phenomena that demonstrate themselves within the healthcare statistics of developing Member States due to gaps in financing and weak health systems' capacities within these regions.<sup>100</sup> Additionally, communities already vulnerable within developing Member States, such as low-income groups, face magnified disparities in access to healthcare, and Member States must consider how social determinants play a role in limiting access to quality healthcare for certain demographics.<sup>101</sup> Specifically, the intersection of disadvantaged groups, poverty, and income inequality must be examined in order to recognize common trends in health disparities in the developing world.<sup>102</sup>

In the wake of COVID-19, developed and developing Member States alike have witnessed the abrupt crisis global health systems have faced, and the pandemic will continue to undermine the efforts of SDG 3 if Member States do not take tangible actions to implement comprehensive health policies.<sup>103</sup> Likewise, economic barriers to quality healthcare must be understood at not only the Member State, but also the individual, level.<sup>104</sup> If Member States make efforts to restructure financial systems and health expenditures that disproportionately impact low-income populations, achieving accessible and quality healthcare can become possible.<sup>105</sup>

## Committee Directive

Formulating solutions that work to alleviate economic barriers developing Member States face in their efforts to provide accessible and quality healthcare will require delegates to further examine patterns in humanitarian aid for health initiatives and how developing governments distribute health services among their populations. More urgently, delegates should consider how pre-existing disparities among developing health systems have contributed to developing Member States' ability to respond to and mitigate COVID-19 thus far. What solutions address the strain and damage put on developing health systems during COVID-19? In what ways can developed Member States support developing health systems? More importantly, how can identifying the root causes of health disparities amongst developing Member States help these nations better prepare and manage disease outbreaks and pandemics in the future? Delegates should consider how the G-77 can advocate for high-income and developed Member States to contribute to the development and reconstruction of health sectors in developing regions. Delegates should also explore methods that aim to improve health access in developing Member States by strengthening weakened health systems in the face of pandemics, non-communicable diseases, and other health crises that arise from poverty, income inequality, and structural financial barriers that developing Member States experience.

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<sup>97</sup> "World Health Statistics 2020: Monitoring Health for SDGs," WHO,

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332070/9789240005105-eng.pdf> (Accessed April 10, 2021).

<sup>98</sup> "World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World," UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/world-social-report/2020-2.html> (Accessed April 13, 2021).

<sup>99</sup> "World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World," UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

<sup>100</sup> Christopher Orach, "Health Equity: Challenges in Low Income Countries," *African Health Sciences* 9, no. 2 (2009): 49-51, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2877288/>.

<sup>101</sup> Efrat Shadmi, et al., "Health Equity and COVID-19: Global Perspectives," *International Journal for Equity in Health* 19, no. 1 (2020): 1-16, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7316580/>.

<sup>102</sup> David H. Peters, et al., "Poverty and Access to Health Care in Developing Countries," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1136, no. 1 (2008): 161-171, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17954679/>.

<sup>103</sup> Lars Jensen and George Gray Molina, "COVID 19 and Health System Vulnerabilities in the Poorest Developing Countries," UNDP Transition Series, July, 2020, [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/transitions-series/covid-19-and-health-system-vulnerabilities-in-the-poorest-develo.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/transitions-series/covid-19-and-health-system-vulnerabilities-in-the-poorest-develo.html).

<sup>104</sup> "The World Health Report: Health Systems Financing - The Path to Universal Coverage," WHO, [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44371/9789241564021\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44371/9789241564021_eng.pdf?sequence=1) (Accessed April 13, 2021).

<sup>105</sup> "The World Health Report: Health Systems Financing - The Path to Universal Coverage," WHO.



## II. Promoting Youth Employment and Opportunity in a Post-Pandemic Economy

### *Introduction*

Although the term “youth” is most commonly associated with a stage of life rather than a specific age (it usually refers to transitioning from a state of dependence to independent adulthood), the United Nations (UN) defines “youth” as “those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, without prejudice to other definitions by Member States.”<sup>106</sup> Youth unemployment is stressful not only for young adults, but also for the community at-large, as it can have lifelong negative effects on career trajectory, financial independence and stability, and feelings of self-worth.<sup>107</sup> Unemployment during youth and early adulthood also results in “lower earnings, higher probability of unemployment, and lower health and job satisfaction in the future.”<sup>108</sup> When these adverse outcomes happen to large portions of a society’s youths, it can do great harm to an entire Member State’s future by reducing its capacity for long-term economic advancement as a whole society.<sup>109</sup>

While both developed and developing Member States struggle with this challenge, high levels of youth unemployment are a greater challenge in developing Member States.<sup>110</sup> Since 90 percent of the world’s young people live in developing Member States, the impact of high youth unemployment is felt more strongly among them.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, youth unemployment creates high economic costs, both directly through public support programs, and indirectly through loss of investment in education, forgone earnings, lower savings, and lower aggregated demand.<sup>112</sup> Developing Member States already have fewer available public resources, so having to bear these economic costs has an even more detrimental effect on them than it would have on developed Member States.<sup>113</sup> Seeing as youth unemployment is a global challenge that has the greatest impact on developing Member States, it is the Group of 77’s (G-77) responsibility to find solutions to this issue.<sup>114</sup> By understanding the history and current situation contributing to global youth unemployment and examining what actions have been taken in the past to try to solve this dilemma, this committee can chart a better course to promote youth employment and opportunity.

### *History*

Youth unemployment has been recognized as a pressing global challenge for over 40 years. In December 1977, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) hosted a high-level conference at its headquarters to discuss various Member States’ experiences with different measures to combat youth unemployment.<sup>115</sup> One proposed solution was to allow a broad range of goods manufactured in developing Member States to be imported duty-free or at reduced rates with the hopes of increasing the developing Member States’

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<sup>106</sup> “Definition of Youth,” UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf> (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>107</sup> Janneke Pieters, “Youth Employment in Developing Countries,” European Commission, October 2013, [http://ftp.iza.org/report\\_pdfs/iza\\_report\\_58.pdf](http://ftp.iza.org/report_pdfs/iza_report_58.pdf) (Accessed May 15, 2021).

<sup>108</sup> Janneke Pieters, “Youth Employment in Developing Countries.”

<sup>109</sup> Janneke Pieters, “Youth Employment in Developing Countries.”

<sup>110</sup> Robert Msigwa and Erasmus F. Kipsha, “Determinants of Youth Unemployment in Developing Countries: Evidences from Tanzania,” *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 14 (2013): 67-76, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234646061.pdf> (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>111</sup> “Adolescent and Youth Demographics: A Brief Overview,” UN Population Fund, <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/One%20pager%20on%20youth%20demographics%20GF.pdf> (Accessed June 17, 2021).

<sup>112</sup> Janneke Pieters, “Youth Employment in Developing Countries.”

<sup>113</sup> Arye L. Hillman and Eva Jenkner, “Educating Children in Poor Countries,” *Economic Issues*, no 33 (2004), International Monetary Fund, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/issues/issues33/> (Accessed May 15, 2021).

<sup>114</sup> “Statement on Behalf of The Group of 77 And China by H.E. Ambassador John W. Ashe, Permanent Representative of Antigua And Barbuda to The United Nations, At The 46th Session of The Commission for Social Development,” G-77, February 7, 2008, <http://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=080207>.

<sup>115</sup> “Youth Employment,” *The OECD Observer*, no. 90 (1978), <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/observer-v1978-1-en.pdf?expires=1625108736&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=0132007BDB86F9157D72E1A04ABB1153>.

export earnings, to promote their industrialization, and to accelerate their rates of economic growth.<sup>116</sup> It was requested that every G-77 member automatically be considered a beneficiary of this plan.<sup>117</sup> Initially, there was opposition to this idea, but thanks to the G-77's joint bargaining power, this request was eventually granted.<sup>118</sup>

The following year, on June 27, 1978, the International Labour Organization (ILO) passed a "Resolution Concerning Youth Employment," which expressed its deep concern over high levels of youth unemployment in developing Member States and encouraged Member States to, "devote priority attention to the elaboration of specific effective measures against youth unemployment."<sup>119</sup> Eighteen years later, in 1996, the UN adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) to guide the UN youth agenda by providing a policy framework and practical guidelines for "national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world."<sup>120</sup> Then, in 2000, the ever-growing importance of youth unemployment was again underscored by the Millennium Declaration's commitment to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work."<sup>121</sup>

Historically, youth have struggled with unemployment more than older adults, with young people globally being three times more likely than adults to be unemployed.<sup>122</sup> This is due to many factors, including "difficulties surrounding the initial school-to-work transition, the relative insecurity and inexperience of new workers, and the frequent job changes undertaken in an attempt to find secure and satisfying employment."<sup>123</sup> Structural barriers such as education and job training programs that are behind developments in the labor market and instead train youths for jobs at risk of disappearing due to automation and other technological advancements can also hinder young people from entering the labor market.<sup>124</sup> Another reason youth unemployment tends to be higher than unemployment rates in older adults is because youth have limited real-world work experience required for many jobs, making it difficult to get employed regardless of how much education or training they have.<sup>125</sup>

Youth unemployment is especially challenging since it can threaten social, economic, and political stability via increased welfare costs, erosion of a Member State's tax-base, unused investments in education and training, and feelings of social exclusion among those affected.<sup>126</sup> When youth go prolonged periods of time without employment, they can turn to criminal activities, drug addiction, and prostitution, which take them away from formal labor markets and increase illegal activities, thereby undermining the very fabric of society and erasing respect for the law and government authority.<sup>127</sup> Youth unemployment has also been linked to increased instances of civil conflict as youth resort to violence to express their frustration with their circumstances.<sup>128</sup> This can be seen in the circumstances

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<sup>116</sup> "Youth Employment," *The OECD Observer*.

<sup>117</sup> "Youth Employment," *The OECD Observer*, no. 90 (1978), <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/observer-v1978-1-en.pdf?expires=1625108736&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=0132007BDB86F9157D72E1A04ABB1153>.

<sup>118</sup> "Youth Employment," *The OECD Observer*.

<sup>119</sup> "Resolutions Adopted by the International Labour Conference at Its 64<sup>th</sup> Session," ILO, 1978, [https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09734/09734\(1978-64\).pdf](https://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/P/09734/09734(1978-64).pdf).

<sup>120</sup> "World Programme of Action for Youth," The UN, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-programme-of-action-for-youth.html> (Accessed March 13, 2021).

<sup>121</sup> Budi Tjahjono, "The Challenge of Youth Employment: A Youth Perspective," The UN, [https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/Preparatory/Statements/Budi\\_RT5.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/meetings/2006/hls2006/Preparatory/Statements/Budi_RT5.pdf) (Accessed May 21, 2021).

<sup>122</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Youth and Human Rights: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights*, A/HRC/39/33, 2018.

<sup>123</sup> "Youth Employment," UN World Youth Report, 2003, <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/ch02.pdf> (Accessed May 21, 2021).

<sup>124</sup> "UN Warns of Virus Impact on Swelling Youth Unemployment," *The Business Times*, March 10, 2020, <https://www.business-times.com.sg/government-economy/un-warns-of-virus-impact-on-swelling-youth-unemployment>.

<sup>125</sup> "Youth Unemployment: A Global Crisis," Mercy Corps, <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/youth-unemployment-global-crisis#youth-unemployment-problem> (Accessed April 7, 2021).

<sup>126</sup> Robert Msigwa and Erasmus F. Kipsha, "Determinants of Youth Unemployment in Developing Countries: Evidences from Tanzania," *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 14 (2013): 67-76, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234646061.pdf> (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>127</sup> Robert Msigwa and Erasmus F. Kipsha, "Determinants of Youth Unemployment in Developing Countries: Evidences from Tanzania."

<sup>128</sup> Robert Msigwa and Erasmus F. Kipsha, "Determinants of Youth Unemployment in Developing Countries: Evidences from Tanzania."

surrounding the 2011 Arab Spring, when high unemployment rates in the Middle East and North Africa led discontented youths to play a central role in riots as a way to express their frustration over few jobs and poor economic opportunities.<sup>129</sup> These riots resulted in violent uprisings in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain as governments were toppled, leaders were killed, and the Syrian civil war ensued – triggering one of the worst humanitarian and refugee crises ever seen.<sup>130</sup>

Even before the COVID-19 global pandemic, youth unemployment was on the rise, partially due to growing enrollment in higher education programs and partially due to a lack of demand for entry-level, high-skilled jobs – meaning youth with higher levels of education but a lack of real-world work experience found themselves too qualified education-wise for many entry-level jobs but under-qualified experience-wise for jobs their education level qualified them for.<sup>131</sup> This made it increasingly harder for youth to find employment right out of college, resulting in youth making up increasingly smaller portions of the global workforce.<sup>132</sup> From 1999-2019, the total number of young people engaged in the global labor force decreased from 568 million to 497 million.<sup>133</sup>

### ***Current Situation***

COVID-19 impacted youth employment opportunities in three ways: 1) disrupting jobs by reducing work hours and earnings and causing job losses for self-employed and paid workers; 2) disrupting education and training for skills required to get jobs in the future; and 3) increasing the difficulty of transitioning from school to work and moving between jobs.<sup>134</sup> In April-May, 2020, the ILO surveyed 12,000 young adults ages 18-29 who were pursuing higher education and had access to internet in 112 Member States and found that 17 percent who were working before the pandemic stopped working altogether, and 42 percent reported a reduction in their income.<sup>135</sup> This sample group only accounted for one quarter of the youth in the Member States studied and does not reflect the challenges of those youth without access to higher education or internet, who would likely be even more severely impacted by the global stay-at-home orders and loss of work and income.<sup>136</sup>

When examining specific regions more closely, the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on young people's employment opportunities in developing Member States become even more evident. In the Asia-Pacific area, more than 86 percent of young entrepreneurs reported the pandemic and related health measures negatively impacted their businesses, resulting in financial downturns, and slowing or complete termination of activity.<sup>137</sup> The World Economic Forum calculated that in the first month of the COVID-19 crisis, the income of informal workers in Africa dropped by 81 percent, with 95 percent of youth employed in the region being in the informal sector.<sup>138</sup> Informal jobs are those jobs which fall outside the framework of legal regulations, due to the enterprises in which the jobs are located being too small and/or not registered with the government or being considered “atypical” and therefore not covered by labor legislation (such as casual, part-time, temporary, or home-based jobs).<sup>139</sup> This means

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<sup>129</sup> Krishna B. Kumar, “Crisis Beyond the Crisis: MENA’s Youth Unemployment Problem,” *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, no. 16 (2020): 186-197. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48573760?seq=1>.

<sup>130</sup> Krishna B. Kumar, “Crisis Beyond the Crisis: MENA’s Youth Unemployment Problem.”

<sup>131</sup> “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020,” ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_737648.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf) (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>132</sup> “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020,” ILO.

<sup>133</sup> “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020,” ILO.

<sup>134</sup> “Putting Youth Employment at the Center of Asia’s Pandemic Recovery,” *Development Asia*, November 20, 2020, <https://development.asia/policy-brief/putting-youth-employment-center-asias-pandemic-recovery>.

<sup>135</sup> “Youth and Covid-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-Being,” ILO, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/documents/publication/wcms\\_753026.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_753026.pdf) (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>136</sup> “Youth and Covid-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-Being,” ILO.

<sup>137</sup> Erol Yayboke, Elena Méndez Leal, Christopher Metzger, and Janina Staguh, “Drivers of Recovery Elevating the Youth, Peace, and Security Agenda,” Center for Strategic & International Studies, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep28758> (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>138</sup> Chido Munyadi, “COVID-19 Is Likely to Increase Youth Unemployment in Africa, This Is How Business Can Mitigate The Damage,” World Economic Forum, June 5, 2020, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/covid-19-is-likely-to-increase-youth-unemployment-in-africa-this-is-how-business-can-mitigate-the-damage>.

<sup>139</sup> Ralf Hussmanns, “Defining and Measuring Informal Employment,” ILO, <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/download/papers/meas.pdf> (Accessed May 15, 2021).

youths employed in informal jobs were often already experiencing low pay, erratic hours, irregular and unsafe working conditions, and a lack of legal and social protections even before the pandemic.<sup>140</sup>

In Latin America and the Caribbean, nearly one-in-four youth were unemployed at the end of 2020 – a level never before recorded in the region.<sup>141</sup> In Colombia specifically, youth unemployment was at 33 percent in mid-2020 and continually rising.<sup>142</sup> According to Guillermo Dema, Regional Youth Employment Specialist at the ILO Office for Latin America and Caribbean, “[L]ack of employment, or decent employment, can lead to situations of frustration or discouragement, which impacts...social stability, and can even have an impact on governance perspectives.”<sup>143</sup> Often, young people take to the streets as an expression of their frustration.<sup>144</sup> This was seen in action in May 2021 when thousands of violent protestors swarmed across Colombia expressing their outrage at poor governance and rising unemployment and poverty during COVID-19.<sup>145</sup> As of May 5, 2021, at least 24 people had died in these protests and at least 87 were missing.<sup>146</sup> Unemployed youths were repeatedly cited as fueling these protests, being referred to as “ni-nis” (“neither-nors”) – meaning they are neither employed nor in school.<sup>147</sup>

The current youth population boom in developing Member States combined with the sudden loss of jobs and education due to COVID-19 has been described as “a combustible recipe for civil unrest, mass migration, and human misery.”<sup>148</sup> In January, 2021, youths in Senegal protesting a COVID-19 curfew fought with security forces while burning tires and erecting barricades against police firing tear gas.<sup>149</sup> That same month, youth protestors in Tunisia broke curfew to continue riots for a fifth night in a row, and more than 600 people were arrested, with most of them being between 14-15 years old.<sup>150</sup> Also in January 2021, hundreds of young, educated Indian men forced to return home after being unable to find jobs their educations prepared them for protested three new farm laws that would make even something as simple as farming their homeland for food more difficult.<sup>151</sup> As COVID-19 continues to worsen overseas, concerns have been raised that social and political unrest will continue to spread globally as youth unemployment increases.<sup>152</sup>

### *Actions Taken by the United Nations*

As mentioned previously, in 1996, the UN adopted A/RES/50/81 – the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) – which was foundational for directing Member States’ attention to thinking about and prioritizing opportunities for youth, specifically with regard to youth employment.<sup>153</sup> Twenty years later, UN ambassadors were

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<sup>140</sup> Ralf Hussmanns, “Defining and Measuring Informal Employment.”

<sup>141</sup> “COVID-19 Leaves a Trail of High Unemployment, Inactivity and Precarious Employment in Latin America and the Caribbean,” ILO, December 17, 2020, [https://www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS\\_764678/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS_764678/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>142</sup> Andres Oppenheimer, “Youths Who Neither Work Nor Study Are Fueling Colombia’s Street Protests,” *Miami Herald*, May 21, 2021, <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/andres-oppenheimer/article251600358.html>.

<sup>143</sup> “Youth Unemployment Rates: A Challenge for the Future of Work in Latin America and the Caribbean,” ILO, August 13, 2019, [https://www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS\\_715152/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/caribbean/newsroom/WCMS_715152/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>144</sup> “Unemployment and Informality Beset Latin American Youth,” ILO, February 13, 2014, [http://ilo.int/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_235661/lang--en/index.htm](http://ilo.int/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_235661/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>145</sup> Julie Turkewitz and Sofia Villamil, “Colombia Police Respond to Protests with Bullets, and Death Toll Mounts,” *The New York Times*, May 5, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/05/world/americas/colombia-covid-protests-duque.html>.

<sup>146</sup> Julie Turkewitz and Sofia Villamil, “Colombia Police Respond to Protests with Bullets, and Death Toll Mounts.”

<sup>147</sup> Andres Oppenheimer, “Youths Who Neither Work Nor Study Are Fueling Colombia’s Street Protests.”

<sup>148</sup> Patrick Fine, Susan Reichle, and Kristin M. Lord, “Youth or Consequences: Put Youth at the Center of COVID-19 Recovery,” *Brookings*, June 8, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/06/08/youth-or-consequences-put-youth-at-the-center-of-covid-19-recovery/>.

<sup>149</sup> “Protests Erupt in Senegal Over new Covid-19 Measures,” *africanews*, January 7, 2021,

<https://www.africanews.com/2021/01/07/protests-erupt-in-senegal-over-new-covid-19-measures/>.

<sup>150</sup> “Tunisia Youths Warned over Riots Amid Covid Curfew,” *BBC News*, January 20, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55733224>.

<sup>151</sup> Anjana Pasricha, “India Farms Protests Highlight Country’s Youth Unemployment Crisis,” *VOA News*, January 29, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/india-farm-protests-highlight-countrys-youth-unemployment-crisis>.

<sup>152</sup> Patrick Fine, Susan Reichle, and Kristin M. Lord, “Youth or Consequences: Put Youth at the Center of COVID-19 Recovery.”

<sup>153</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 81, *World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond*, A/RES/50/81, March 13, 1996, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f4c34.html>.

still referencing WPAY as the guiding force behind their efforts to prioritize youth opportunity and development.<sup>154</sup> At the 2005 International Labour Conference, a resolution concerning youth employment was adopted that focused on three key pillars to address youth unemployment: knowledge building; advocacy and promotion of decent work for youth; and technical assistance to support Member States as they strive to improve the quantity and quality of jobs for youth.<sup>155</sup> At the time it was passed, this resolution was the most comprehensive and up-to-date framework for the ILO's work relating to youth employment.<sup>156</sup>

As the ILO built on the foundation laid by this resolution, it saw the implementation of many successful projects.<sup>157</sup> The Education and Skills Training for Youth Employment Project in Indonesia (EAST) saw more than 70,000 youth receive job and education counselling and employability and entrepreneurship services through the education system and employment centers.<sup>158</sup> The Youth Employment Programme in Timor-Leste generated 1,046,014 work days for 35,533 people in rural areas and helped more than 12,000 young jobseekers receive counselling, job placement services, internships, and self-employment assistance.<sup>159</sup> The Peruvian Youth Employment Action Plan, which was developed with technical support from the ILO, helped more than 260,000 disadvantaged youth find jobs.<sup>160</sup> Over the next few years following the implementation of these programs, youth unemployment rates fell across Southeast Asia and Latin America, with Indonesia specifically seeing youth unemployment rates go from 25.82 percent in 2005 to 15.6 percent following the conclusion of EAST in 2012.<sup>161</sup> Lowering rates of youth unemployment have been associated with providing youth with a sense of status, purpose, and belonging, and bring peace, stability, and progress to communities, which directly reduces many of the common negative impacts of youth unemployment.<sup>162</sup>

The G-77 has also been vocal in its support for increasing youth employment opportunities via endorsement speeches given at high-level UN meetings. In a statement given on July 26, 2011, on behalf of the G-77 and China during the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly (GA) on Youth, the National Director for Youth of Argentina stressed it was imperative to “further efforts to support young people in developing their potential and to tackle the obstacles they face... Youth unemployment is a clear example of a challenge affecting youth that requires new ideas and renewed efforts from Member States and the international community.”<sup>163</sup> Later that year on September 23, 2011, at the 35<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China, the ministers jointly declared that “unemployment has become a global problem affecting youth worldwide, to which a global response is required,” and urged all Member States to pursue efforts toward developing a global strategy geared toward effectively addressing youth unemployment.<sup>164</sup> In September 2018 at a high-level meeting of the 73<sup>rd</sup> UNGA on Youth Employment, the G-77 and China again emphasized addressing youth unemployment as essential for attaining sustainable global economic growth, and the UN Secretary-General praised the G-77 and China for its focus on youth employment.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> “Young People Must Be at Centre of Sustainable Development Agenda, Speakers Say, as General Assembly Marks Anniversary of World Programme of Action for Youth,” UN General Assembly, May 29, 2015, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/ga11648.doc.htm>.

<sup>155</sup> “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action,” International Labour Office, [http://adapt.it/adapt-indice-a-z/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ILO\\_The-youth-employment-crisis.pdf](http://adapt.it/adapt-indice-a-z/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ILO_The-youth-employment-crisis.pdf) (Accessed March 15, 2021).

<sup>156</sup> “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action,” International Labour Office.

<sup>157</sup> “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action,” International Labour Office.

<sup>158</sup> “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action,” International Labour Office.

<sup>159</sup> “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action,” International Labour Office.

<sup>160</sup> “The Youth Employment Crisis: Time for Action,” International Labour Office.

<sup>161</sup> “Unemployment, Youth Total (% of Total Labor Force Ages 15-24) (Modeled ILO Estimate) – Indonesia,” The World Bank, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=ID> (Accessed April 7, 2021).

<sup>162</sup> “Youth Unemployment: A Global Crisis,” Mercy Corps, <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/youth-unemployment-global-crisis#youth-unemployment-problem> (Accessed April 7, 2021).

<sup>163</sup> “Statement on Behalf of The Group of 77 and China by Maria Laura Braiza, National Director for Youth of Argentina, at the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly of Youth,” G-77, July 26, 2011, <https://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=110726>.

<sup>164</sup> “Ministerial Declaration,” G-77, <https://www.g77.org/doc/Declaration2011.htm> (Accessed March 13, 2021).

<sup>165</sup> Abubakr Salim, “G-77: Ayorkor Botchwey, Others Commit to Improve Lives of Youth,” *Ghana Guardian*, <https://ghanaguardian.com/g-77-ayorkor-botchwey-others-commit-to-improve-lives-of-youth> (Accessed July 1, 2021).



In addition to the above efforts, in November 2015, the UN Chief Executives Board endorsed the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth (GIDJY).<sup>166</sup> The initiative was developed by 19 UN entities and proposed several areas of focus: 1) engaging key world leaders and stakeholders in high-level policy action on youth employment; 2) increasing national and regional policies and interventions on youth employment; 3) combining existing expertise and increasing information on what strategies are successful at combating youth unemployment; and 4) leveraging existing facilities' resources while mobilizing additional resources.<sup>167</sup> The GIDJY placed special emphasis on identifying sectors and areas with potential for job creation, promoting young people's access to productive assets and environmentally sustainable economies, expanding investments to improve youths' access to education and training, and promoting the connection between education and skills development systems.<sup>168</sup>

In 2017, partners of the GIDJY launched the online engagement platform "www.decentjobsforyouth.org" to help foster partnerships and commitment to acting on behalf of unemployed youths, build evidence around what works in youth employment, and share updates about upcoming events and news related to youth employment.<sup>169</sup> This website shares news about upcoming initiatives to further the mission of the GIDJY, promotes upcoming online workshops to help people better understand factors that contribute to youth unemployment, and publicizes blog posts focused on highlighting various approaches and lessons learned from actions being taken around the world to combat youth unemployment.<sup>170</sup> So far, there have been 68 commitments made by academic institutions, youth and nonprofit organizations, government and inter-governmental organizations, foundations, UN entities, and private sector organizations to take tangible, focused actions toward promoting global youth employment and opportunity.<sup>171</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

Understanding the harmful effects widespread youth unemployment can have on developing Member States' ability to grow economically, it is important for the G-77 to identify what factors contribute to youth unemployment in order to better inform strategies targeted at combating this issue, thereby furthering the G-77's mission of advancing its Member States' economic interests.<sup>172</sup> Lack of continuing education or vocational training that adequately prepare youths for modern-day jobs, insufficient work experience that makes youths unable to compete with older adults already in the workforce, and poor labor markets with few job opportunities (such as the current global labor market due to COVID-19) all contribute to high levels of youth unemployment.<sup>173</sup> By finding ways to promote youth employment and opportunity in a post-pandemic world, economies will be able to grow and develop, and communities will be strengthened as youth find a renewed sense of purpose and identity within their societies.<sup>174</sup>

### ***Committee Directive***

As delegates begin writing position papers on ways to address this topic, they should ask themselves several questions. First, what underlying challenges affected employment opportunities for youth in their individual

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<sup>166</sup> "The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth Backed by UNIDO and Other UN Entities," UNIDO, <https://www.unido.org/news/global-initiative-decent-jobs-youth-backed-unido-and-other-un-entities> (Accessed March 15, 2021).

<sup>167</sup> "The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth Backed by UNIDO and Other UN Entities," UNIDO, <https://www.unido.org/news/global-initiative-decent-jobs-youth-backed-unido-and-other-un-entities> (Accessed March 15, 2021).

<sup>168</sup> "The Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth Backed by UNIDO and Other UN Entities," UNIDO.

<sup>169</sup> "Decent Jobs for Youth Initiative," UN Capital Development Fund, <https://uncdf-staging.icentric-dev.com/youthstart/decent-jobs-for-youth-initiative> (Accessed May 18, 2021).

<sup>170</sup> "Decent Jobs for Youth," Decent Jobs for Youth, <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/#latest> (Accessed May 18, 2021).

<sup>171</sup> "Decent Jobs for Youth: Global Action," Decent Jobs for Youth, <https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/action#commitments> (Accessed May 18, 2021).

<sup>172</sup> "About the Group of 77," G-77, [www.g77.org/doc/index.html](http://www.g77.org/doc/index.html) (Accessed January 31, 2021).

<sup>173</sup> Robert Msigwa and Erasmus F. Kipsha, "Determinants of Youth Unemployment in Developing Countries: Evidences from Tanzania," *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development* 4, no. 14 (2013): 67-76, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234646061.pdf> (Accessed March 7, 2021).

<sup>174</sup> Robert Msigwa and Erasmus F. Kipsha, "Determinants of Youth Unemployment in Developing Countries: Evidences from Tanzania."

Member State or region before COVID-19? Second, what policies or practical, tangible programs can be implemented or expanded to bring about immediate, positive change in job opportunities for youth in individual communities? Third, how will these policies and programs be funded? Identifying what factors need to be addressed beyond the effects of COVID-19 will help delegates create solutions that provide positive results long after the pandemic has ended. Creating proposals for both policies and practical programs to implement in individual communities will ensure various regional needs are taken into consideration when creating solutions to this challenge. Thinking through funding for these proposals will help identify realistic ways to save costs while still implementing high-quality programs and policies in as efficient a manner as possible. By focusing on these three questions, delegates will be well on their way to creating solutions that address global youth unemployment for many years to come.

## Annotated Bibliography:

### **Topic I: Addressing Economic Barriers to Accessible and Quality Healthcare in Developing Member States**

Jensen, Lars, and George Gray Molina. "COVID 19 and Health System Vulnerabilities in the Poorest Developing Countries." *United Nations Development Program*. July, 2020. [www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/transitions-series/covid-19-and-health-system-vulnerabilities-in-the-poorest-develo.html](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/transitions-series/covid-19-and-health-system-vulnerabilities-in-the-poorest-develo.html).

This policy brief from the United Nations Development Programme assesses several Member States' global health responses to COVID-19 to highlight the challenges developing countries will face in the post-COVID environment due to the fact that these responses do not address long-term health barriers. This article emphasizes that COVID-19 has devastated health systems in developed Member States, let alone those in developing Member States, and stresses that efforts to mitigate the pandemic must expand healthcare capacities long-term instead of using "suppression" to curb the spread of the infection. Member States are urged to consider strengthening pre-existing healthcare systems and invest in emergency health-system preparedness responses. Additionally, they are encouraged to adopt socioeconomic reactions that protect vulnerable economies and healthcare workers in low and middle-income countries.

"The World Health Report: Health Systems Financing - The Path to Universal Coverage." *World Health Organization*. 2010. [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44371/9789241564021\\_eng.pdf?sequence=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/44371/9789241564021_eng.pdf?sequence=1).

Providing a variety of recommendations for Member States in terms of financial considerations they must make in order to achieve universal healthcare, this report highlights the current gaps in the health systems of both developed and developing Member States. This is useful in providing a clear pathway for strategies that can be implemented to achieve full universal healthcare. The section "Removing financial risks and barriers to access" will be especially useful to delegates, as this portion outlines several mechanisms to mitigate economic obstacles to accessible healthcare, such as funding using income and wage taxes, pooled funds, community and microinsurance, and multilateral pools for the protection of health for all peoples. Furthermore, this report can aid delegates in conceptualizing a financial solution to combat the shortage of accessible and quality healthcare in developing Member States.

"World Health Statistics 2020: Monitoring Health for the SDGs." *World Health Organization*. 2020. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/332070/9789240005105-eng.pdf>.

The 2020 World Health Statistics Report provides an extensive look at the progress being made across the globe in pursuit of accomplishing the 2030 SDGs through assessing global health data. The report also identifies the progress and failure of Member States, particularly the steady but slow progression of access to healthcare in low and middle-income countries (LMIC) and the internal disparities between rich and poor citizens in LMIC health systems. The report also highlights the increased trends in death by violence, the rise of contraction of noncommunicable diseases (NCD) and NCD mortality rates, and the advancement of life expectancy rates in low-income Member States. Delegates may utilize this source to further comprehend the data being collected by the World Health Organization and other United Nations bodies to assess the status of global health and identify any gaps in the research.

"World Social Report 2020: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World." *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. 2020. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/02/World-Social-Report2020-FullReport.pdf>.

This report by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs analyzes inequality in the context of emerging global phenomena like international migration, climate change, technological advancement, and urbanization. These global trends are critical to understanding the inequalities that developing countries are experiencing, especially as the deadline for the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development is approaching. This report highlights the interconnectedness of global disparities in both the North and South, stressing a multilateral approach to facilitate equitable solutions. Despite rapid economic growth, global imbalances continue to surge, and consideration of gender, ethnicity, race, and

socioeconomic status are essential factors to inspect when assessing newly emerging disparities, especially in the health sector. This report utilizes studies on poverty and labor market trends to provide quantitative demonstrations of how global trends undermine opportunities and resources, including exacerbating pre-existing inequalities. This report can help delegates combat recently-developed economic barriers in developing Member States' health sectors by providing information on multilateral pathways to reducing global inequality.

“World Youth Report: Youth and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*. 2018. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>.

By emphasizing the disparities in global development outcomes due to the lack of participation from youth, this report highlights the role of youth populations in expanding the achievement of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. The world's population includes 1.2 billion people who are considered “young people,” and yet youth have not been at the forefront of development initiatives thus far. Additionally, a majority of the populations in the least developed and low and middle-income countries (LMICs) are youth. This report underlines the overall importance of ensuring youth are included in and at the forefront of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) schemes, since they are not only the beneficiaries of SDG accomplishments, but also have the ability to amplify development efforts across the globe. As the report suggests, a multisectoral approach centering on vulnerable and low-income populations is the best strategy for youth to address pressing challenges in the developing world. Moreover, a surplus of youths can benefit LMICs in need of higher productivity, increased assets, and rapid economic growth. This report can help delegates assess youths' potential contribution to the implementation of SDGs and how youth can alleviate some of the economic barriers developing Member States face as they strive to achieve SDG 3.

## **Topic II: Promoting Youth Employment and Opportunity in a Post-Pandemic Economy**

“Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the Future of Jobs.” *International Labour Office*. 2020. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_737648.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_737648.pdf).

Beginning with statistics and facts about historical global youth unemployment rates and differences between regions, this report goes into detail about the impact technology and the digital divide have had, and continue to have, on global youth unemployment and job opportunities. This report provides specific suggestions about policy actions that can be taken to help ensure young people have greater access to decent jobs. With this resource's particular focus on technology's role in global youth unemployment, this report can be useful for delegates seeking to further understand how technology impacts job opportunities for youth around the world. The clear, concise policy recommendations at the end of the report can be especially useful for helping delegates think of concrete actions that can be taken to help tackle this topic.

Khatun, Fahmida, and Syed Yusuf Saadat. “Fourth Industrial Revolution, Technological Advancement and Youth Employment: A South Asian Perspective.” *South Asia Economic Journal* 21, no. 1, (2020): 58–75. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1391561420914187>.

This research explores the relationship between the fourth industrial revolution in East Asia and regional youth unemployment. By examining technological advancements and youth unemployment in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, this paper shows how industrialization can either generate new jobs for younger generations, or it can make finding employment more difficult for youth if their educational training does not prepare them for jobs utilizing new technology. The authors ultimately conclude that technological advancement can have a positive impact on youth employment, as long as youth educational attainment is high enough to offset technological progress. This resource can help delegates think through the relationship between education, technology, and youth employment when considering factors that influence the issue of youth employment and opportunity.

Kumar, Krishna B. "Crisis Beyond the Crisis: MENA's Youth Unemployment Problem." *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, no. 16, (2020): 186-197. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48573760?seq=1>.

Kumar works to provide a thorough overview of youth unemployment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) with specific attention being paid to the 2011 Arab Spring and that disruptive event's connection to youth unemployment in an effort to outline factors in the MENA region that impact youth unemployment and are important to consider in the wake of COVID-19. Kumar specifically highlights the connection between youth unemployment and political unrest and points out that youth unemployment numbers were at the same level in 2011 as they were in 2019 before the pandemic, with some countries like Algeria and Egypt actually having *higher* levels of youth unemployment in 2019. Noting the significant contributory impact youth unemployment had on regional protests and demonstrations, and considering the inevitable increase in youth unemployment during COVID-19, this article can help delegates think through some of the potential challenges the MENA region will be facing with regard to youth unemployment as it tries to recover from the global pandemic.

Loprest, Pamela, Shayne Spaulding, and Demetra Smith Nightingale. "Disconnected Young Adults: Increasing Engagement and Opportunity." *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 5, no. 5 (2019): 221-243. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2019.5.5.11>.

This article examines the causes and consequences of youth disconnect in the United States and explores ways to tackle this challenge that go beyond stimulating the economy and general job creation. Identified factors include: 1) increasing global competition, automation, and technology; 2) changing societal norms that are more accepting of young people being out of work and school; 3) increased video game and opioid abuse; 4) involvement in the criminal justice system; 5) teen parenting; 6) lack of access to childcare; and 7) having to pay child support. In response, this paper calls for: 1) programs that increase youth's work readiness and occupational skills, including 'soft skills' and their human capital; 2) better integrating academic and technical skills into standard high school instruction; 3) summer employment or internship programs and sector-based training programs and apprenticeships for youth; 4) revising community colleges' structure to improve completion rates, 5) removing barriers to school and work; and 6) subsidized job programs and wage supplements. This resource can help delegates think through various factors that can exacerbate youth unemployment and need to be addressed, or at least taken into consideration, before writing proposed solutions for this topic.

Machingo, Hlungwani Promise, and Cheryl Mohamed Sayeed. "Innovation and Structural Change: A Paradigm Shift in Addressing Youth Unemployment in Zimbabwe as a Way to Meet Its 2030 Agenda." *Journal of African Union Studies* 8, no. 2 (2019): 201-217. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26890411>.

Using Zimbabwe as an example, Machingo and Sayeed advocate for implementing innovative entrepreneurial strategies in agriculture and artisanal mining to address the youth unemployment crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that outdated training curricula do not align with modern industry needs, and therefore, Africa's youth are not being properly prepared for work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They also list other factors contributing to high youth unemployment, including structural and infrastructural bottlenecks, deindustrialization, and poor economic policies. Considering these challenges, Machingo and Sayeed call for innovative structural, technological, and digital changes to overcome the lack of jobs available for African youths. This paper can help delegates identify factors beyond COVID-19 that impede promoting youth employment and can help direct their attention to various challenges that need to be addressed in order to solve the global crisis of youth unemployment.