



Supporting LEDCs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals



UNEP

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Issue: Supporting LEDC's in achieving the sustainable development goals

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Introduction

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was established on the 5th of June 1972 in Stockholm by Maurice Strong, the president of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment. The program's main motivation was to encourage the More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) to bring significant attention to the issue of the world's environment due to the mixed opinions within the leadership of the United Nations (UN) member states. In 2015 the General Assembly of the United Nations presented a resolution about the establishment of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The main objective of these targets is to promote the sustainable, social and economic development of all nations, with the deadline of Agenda 2030 in mind. Due to the short notice of the issue and financial difficulties, many of the Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) are unable to successfully fulfill the 17 SDGs. Currently, the Scandinavian countries including Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark are the most successful in completing and promoting the targets within their countries, scoring above 80 points on SDG Index and Dashboard, on a scale between 0 and 100. On the other hand, the Central African Republic, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Niger, are the lowest-scoring nations with +/- 30 points. As mentioned above, the SDGs do not only restrict themselves to the improvement of the environment, but also aim to improve the living conditions of the whole civilization, especially the people in need, or with a lack of resources, which help them to survive yet another day. Unfortunately, the progression toward succeeding in fulfilling the SDGs is expensive, according to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2018, the estimate of combined government spending is around \$21 trillion. Although the major source of funding for this issue comes from the MEDCs, the same source suggests an increase in total spending to \$33 trillion by 2030. Hereby, a number of the LEDCs will need to be required to increase their spending on the SDGs to provide better living conditions for their citizens and other communities worldwide.

Definition of Key Terms

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

These are the 17 objectives enforced by the UN General Assembly in 2015, which are aimed at supporting the development of countries' economies, social well-being, and the improvement of the environment. These goals help countries to navigate their policies to promote the aforementioned three needs of the world. The SDGs main focus is to transform the people's world, and call for action to end various global issues such as ending poverty, or inequalities, promoting the better effects of health, justice and seeking to protect the Earth. Each of the SDGs is different, although interdependent on each other, therefore the plans for these goals aim to follow similar structure, allowing many countries to work together and create better sphere for their people to live in.

Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

The term is commonly used to describe a nation, or a country that is struggling, or has struggled to use its resources at its highest efficiency, and is struggling to improve industrially. An example of LEDCs are Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Namibia, and the People's Republic of Laos

More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs)

It is the description grouping several countries, that exceed in the successful use of resources, as well as developing the country in terms of industry, and socially. Besides, MEDCs are also countries that have a better life expectancy, and higher life standards, with greater amount of big, and grown cities. MEDCs are usually countries with greater developed economies, which can be seen by the development of the industry, as well as the development of properties. Examples of MEDCs are United States, Japan, Canada, New Zealand and all European countries.

Agenda 2030

It is a definition of the deadline, for the improvement and fulfillment of the forenamed SDGs. The United Nations aims to complete the aforementioned 18 objectives by the start of 2030, whilst the policy is being implemented in 2015. Agenda 2030 is also a guideline for the LEDCs to improve the living standards of their people and secure their economies, societies and majorly, the environment.

UNESCO

A UN established UNESCO in November 1945, in London, United Kingdom, to fight the ideas of nations not believing in ever-lasting peace worldwide. According to the UNESCO website, the organization aims to bring peace and security through industries such as education, sciences, culture, communication, and information. Their programs are promoted with the theme of achievement of the SDGs by 2030, which were adopted by the General Assembly in 2015. UNESCO aims to promote an unbiased perspective of knowledge worldwide, to encourage the world's citizens to understand various viewpoints and ideas.

Economic Efficiency

It is a term used in economics to describe the successful allocation and distribution of resources, to achieve the resource's maximum potential. In the issue of SDGs, the aforementioned is relevant as it is the country's motivation to strive for the development of efficient allocation of resources, to promote social, environmental and most of all, economic well-being.

UN Decade of Actions

It is a timeline set by the UN to successfully fulfill the promise of Agenda 2030. It is the decade between years of 2021 and 2030. Within the timeframe, the UN calls for the increase of sustainable development and solutions to help accelerate the progress of SDGs. The framework has its main focus on global, local, and people actions that would positively impact the improvement of the objectives regarding the world's wellbeing.

General Overview

The Beginning

Since the creation of the UN in October 1945, the organization aimed to collaborate with the member states, to ensure the successful promotion of peace, and to promote collaboration between member states, to improve the economic, and social well-being of the citizens. In 1968, the General Assembly of the UN called for the first environmental conference to be held in the Swedish capital Stockholm. Therefore, the organization of the first UN conference regarding the issues of the environment was held in Stockholm, in June 1972, the "First Earth Summit", with the main objective of raising awareness of the human footprint on the world's nature. However, the downside of the conference was the goal presented by the UN. Its focus was mainly on creating recommendations

and guidelines for member states to follow when tackling the issue of climate change. Following the conference in June 1972, the organization of UNEP was enforced by the General Assembly, allowing the international body to have a simplified way of tackling pollution more effectively.

The 2010s & Present Issues

In 2015, the General Assembly of the UN established the 2030 Agenda, with the proposal of the 17 SDGs, to promote economic, social, and environmental well-being, within all the member states. The 15-year plan had its urgency, due to the growing gap in the economics between the member states of the UN, hence it created the grouping of nations, called the MEDCs and the LEDCs. Furthermore, the upside of these gatherings allows for the UN to target their specific goals towards countries who demand their actions on global issues like poverty, or inequalities. Since then, the yearly spending on fulfilling the aforementioned goals has reached the barrier of \$21 trillion in 2015, with the total costs possibly rising to \$33 trillion in 2030. Therefore creating a spending gap between the MEDCs and the LEDCs. Therefore, the total spending of each nation differs on their budgets, but in a general sense, the more money a government spends on completing the SDGs, the better effects they seek.

Regarding the LEDCs, the progress of SDGs has not seen the same progress when compared to the MEDCs. This can be suggested by many reasons such as fewer funds from the government budget being allocated to the country's development, or inefficient distribution and use of scarce resources by a nation-state. Currently, the enormous difference in the number of spending between the high and low-income nations, represented in the image on the left, results in various achievement rates of countries. For example, Denmark is one of the best countries, when it comes to achieving the SDGs with the completion of twenty-five from a total of hundred twenty-nine objectives, whilst consisting exceeding results in terms of social well-being, education, and justice. On the other hand, an example of a less successive country in terms of achieving the SDGs would be South Sudan, which has achieved only 38.6%. For the African country, the biggest issue is finding peace within the nation. Currently there are various disputes between the government, and the citizens of South Sudan, contributing to their lack of progress in terms of SDG 16, which seeks for peace and justice. Besides, country is struggling with providing food aid to the citizens (SDG 2), inequalities between genders in workforce (SDG 4), violence across the country, with a targeted group of women and children (SDG 5), and the economic stagnation (SDG 8). Moreover, South Sudan is not the only country struggling to seek for peace and justice, as this also involves countries like Myanmar, Niger, or Jamaica. Furthermore, the objective of the SDGs is to promote worldwide peace, and justice (SDG 16). This also includes violence within the countries like Coup d'états or gang

violence. Although prevention of such incidents is not the job of the UNEP, the organization can focus on providing data to the General Assembly to bring attention to the issue, and create potential solution and restrictions for the countries or groups in conversation. Moreover, Coup d'états are a common example of violence within the border of a country. Latest examples include countries like Thailand, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, Syria, and Bolivia. In recent years, citizens of the LEDCs started to rebel against their own governments, resulting in the increased number of Coup d'états. Between 1945 and 2021, Bolivia and Thailand had seen the most of Coup d'états, at a number of 25 and 18 respectively. This data suggests the common recurring use of violence within the LEDCs, unblinking the world to progress and achieve the SDG 16.

Each of the SDGs could be described in detail, using examples, of many different countries, and how they plan to achieve the following goal. Although this is up to the delegates to see which goals are the most urgent, and which need to be focused on the most. Therefore, a detailed research is needed for each of the goals, to understand what actions are, and will be undertaken by various governments, to formulate new solutions, or learn from previous mistakes.

Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
5 th of June 1972	Establishment of the UNEP organization
5-16 th of June 1972	The "First Earth Summit" conference - Stockholm
22 nd of May 2014	Thai Coup d'état
25 th of September 2015	Resolution on SDGs is enforced
24-25 th of September 2019	2019 Sustainable Development Summit
1 st of February 2021	Myanmar Coup d'état
23-24 th of January 2022	Burkina Faso Coup d'état
1 st of January 2030	Agenda 2030

Major Parties Involved

Finland

As of December 2023, Finland is considered to be the most developed country in the world, in terms of achieving the SDGs. It scores 86.76%, ranking in front of Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria in respective order. The results are in order, due to Finish policy on reduction of Greenhouse

emissions by 2040-50 and implementation of good educational environment for the students, ranking 2nd in world's best education system behind Sweden.

Denmark

As mentioned earlier in the report, Denmark is a country with one of the highest achievements of SDGs since its enforcement in September 2015. Denmark is a great example of a country with various policies which help them to create more renewable energy to support the environment and create better education for its citizens. Although Denmark is a MEDC, many of the European countries use the Scandinavian country as an example to succeed in achieving the SDGs.

Myanmar

Since the Coup d'état in February 2021, the country has been struggling economically and socially. Between February and November of that year, the police killed 1200 protestant and detained 8700 government activists, journalists and civil servants. Besides the occurrence of violence, the country is struggling with the increasing amount of threats towards women's and girls' rights. There has been an increase in trafficking, which slows down the development of the country in achieving the SDGs.

South Sudan

According to Sustainable Development Report from 2023, South Sudan ranks 166th from 166 assessed countries, in terms of achieving SDGs with a score of 38.68%. Similarly to Myanmar, South Sudan is currently struggling with attacks on their civilians by the youth supporters of the government, displacing 44,000 people, with the deaths of 173 civilians, and 131 women raped. Furthermore, following the tensions due to the South Sudanese civil war between December 2013 and February 2020, the country still has disputes among its people, and lacks leadership, to promote the achievement of the SDGs.

Possible Solutions

A major issue to look out for, when discussing the issue of supporting the LEDCs in achieving the SDGs is not the lack of funds that the UN possesses, nor the lack of groups or parties that take care of various parts of the environmental issues. Some could argue, that it would be unnecessary for the delegates to come up with new organizations, as these would further disrupt supporting the

LEDCs, due to their lengthy adaptation time to new tasks, distribution of resources, and labor in less demanded areas. Therefore the main objective for the delegates would be to look further into detail regarding the current planning of the UN about the support towards the LEDCs. Currently, the UN Decade of Actions is a widely known concept, although it may seem vague to many of the countries, therefore this could be an area of focus.

Furthermore, regarding the already existing organization, the delegates could look towards their contribution to the issue. If their role, or task has little to do with the problem, delegates could look for alternatives that could improve their efficiency and quality of work. Besides, due to time restrictions, no plan should be time extensive enough to meet the expectations of the Agenda 2030. In addition, various solutions seeking time gains or limitations could see some processes being sped up, like job allocation or funding various industries. Although these ideas could be further exploited by the delegates.

Lastly, the delegates could look through various planning for different goals, and how the UN wants them to be achieved. This can give the delegates a perspective on how actions have already been implemented, and suggest its success rate worldwide. Therefore, when incorporating any solution regarding the SDGs and support for the LEDCs, the time considered is a major limiting factor, to any ideas implemented into the resolutions.

Further Reading

SDGs are an extensive topic in terms of pieces of information, statistics, and goals. UN has various smaller organizations that particularly target the subject of the environment, which provide various data reports, results, and various graphs. These can support the understanding of how various member states cope with achieving all or most of the SDGs. During research, the most helpful can be lengthy data reports, which provide extensive information and research reports on a country, with supportive data points.

Additionally, there are various sites outside the UN network, which also provide insight into the current, past, and future spending patterns of various member states. This can provide another perspective into the issue and can allow presenting a biased explanation, or opinion. A useful resource for various data graphs on the World's spending can be found at [brookings.edu](https://www.brookings.edu). Moreover, there are various sides go into detail, specifically for each of the SDGs. Most reliable resources should be connected, or enforced by the UN, to provide the most accurate data. An example of this would be the Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals. The organization provides up-to-date data,

with specific maps for incidents relating to the specific SDG, which could be a useful resource to focus on certain issues above others.

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