Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2024 Diyafah International School MUN (DISMUN). We are excited to announce that for our General Assembly (GA) this year, we will be discussing how we can ensure access to affordable, sustainable, and reliable energy for all.

Unfortunately, the lack of access to clean and sustainable energy has caused a regression to the development of human and economic development. There are so many alternatives just waiting to be harnessed and used for the benefit of nations and peoples everywhere. During the conference, we will delve deep into the ways that we can create and sustain a clean, reliable future that maintains our beautiful planet for the generations to come.

This guide has been created to help and introduce you to this topic, however, this must not be used to replace the delegates' independent preparation and research. We strongly encourage you all to conduct a thorough study about your Member State and its involvement on the given topic, but not just your own but other Member States as well, so that you have resources and information to negotiate and reach a final decision. In preparation for the conference, each delegation will use their individual research to write and submit a position paper. The guidelines for this paper can be found on the DISMUN Handbook.

Finally, delegates are required to read the compulsory DIS Conduct Expectations on the website that clearly outlines the dress code and other expectations for the delegates of the General Assembly. To conclude, we would like to strongly state that any harassment based on race, gender and national origin, age, religion or disabilities will not be tolerated at the conference.

For clarification on any questions or queries, please contact the Chair or Co-Chair:
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Good luck on your research and preparations and we are so pleased with your involvement in the DISMUN conference this year, please remember to work hard but to also have fun!

Sincerely,

Shivar and Eden

I. Ensuring Access to Affordable, Sustainable, and Reliable Energy for All

"Energy is the golden thread that connects economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. With access to energy, people can study, go to university, get a job, start a business – and reach their full potential."

Introduction

According to the United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), energy has the power to transform individuals' lives, the economy, climate, and the earth as a whole. Energy is a central component of national economies, security, climate change, food production, and access to energy increases incomes and quality of life. Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy is a pillar of human development. It is predicted that more than half the world (6.5 billion people) will be living in an urban area by 2050. However, currently one-fifth of the world's population does not have access to electricity, one in seven people lack access to clean and renewable energy, and over 3 billion people still rely on non-renewable resources for energy such as coal, oil, and gas, to power everyday tasks like cooking, cleaning, transportation, and sanitation. These non-renewable resources are detrimental to the environment due to their by-products such as greenhouse gases and create indoor air pollution and resulting health issues for their users. The General Assembly Second must consider how the global gap in achieving access to energy can be mitigated, in order to provide all people with needed affordable, sustainable, and reliable energy resources.

International and Regional Framework

Over the last few decades, the international community has increasingly supported the goals of sustainable and accessible energy through framework documents such as the Agenda 21 (1992), the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (IPoA) (2011), and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (2015). All three of these documents reference the importance of moving away from non-renewable energy resources and building economic capacity, national ownership, and infrastructure within developing countries in order to meet global energy goals. Agenda 21 encourages technology transfer, research, and financial assistance in order to bolster energy sectors within developing countries. The IPoA focuses on building infrastructure within developing countries through increasing energy supply, renewable energy sources, and energy production in developing countries. The IPoA also has set objectives to be reached before 2020 to better enhance developing countries including enhancing financial resources, promoting good governance, and reducing vulnerability of developing countries in the midst of natural disasters which all play a vital role in the maintenance and sustainability of energy. Finally, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda emphasizes the positive impact that renewable energy, clean energy storage, energy efficiency, and public and private investment in energy could have for developing countries economically and politically.

In 1997, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) met to discuss global issues that had emerged due to climate change. The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997) was the result of this meeting; Kyoto centered around national responsibility in reporting and reducing carbon emissions and remains a central document in guiding the move towards global sustainable energy today. Article 2 of the Kyoto Protocol emphasizes that achieving lower emission consumption will allow for the enhancement of energy productivity. It also suggests that Member States who choose to partake in efforts should conduct research on their levels of emissions in their respective counties and work towards new ways to develop new and renewable forms of energy. After the Kyoto Protocol, the UNFCCC also developed the Paris Agreement (2015), which is a key framework document that works to strengthen the global response to climate change and the threat it poses to the planet. Some of the key aspects of the Paris Agreement include mitigation of climate change, voluntary cooperation of all parties to stay involved in the efforts, financing and technology transfer, and capacity-building support.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) marked a new and previously unprecedented era of sustainability for the international community.154 Providing the world with modern and sustainable energy is a core piece of the SDGs; Goal 7 focuses entirely on ensuring "access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all," and has five specific targets to achieve this goal. This SDG aims to enhance international cooperation on clean energy research

and technology; increase the global share of renewable energy; double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and upgrade infrastructure and technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services in developing countries, all by 2030. In addition to SDG 7, energy is also linked directly to other SDGs, including those regarding poverty eradication (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), and job creation (SDG 8).157 SDG 12 is also key to the sustainability of energy as it works toward educating energy consumer on how to safely and efficiently consume resources in their respective areas. SDG 13, which focuses on climate action, is also relevant as the continued burning of nonrenewable resources due to lack of energy alternatives is also a major source of air pollution.

Regional bodies are also working to obtain clean, sustainable, and affordable energy resources. Currently, the European Union (EU) has been actively working towards sustainability and clean energy through cutting carbon dioxide emissions and working with its Energy Union to promote access to sustainable energy within its members.161 The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific has an energy portal and forum which works to combine statistical indicators and accessible policy documents on energy to their members. The Economic and Social Commission for West Africa has a number of projects engaging the private sector in providing energy resources to members, and the Economic Commission for Africa has adopted several clean energy technologies policies in order to work towards the achievement of sustainable and affordable energy sources for all.

Role of the International System

In the General Assembly's seventy-second session in September 2017, the General Assembly Second Committee considered a wide variety of framework documents regarding affordable, sustainable, and reliable energy. These documents included Secretary General report on Ensuring Access to affordable, sustainable, reliable, and modern energy for all (2017), which discussed possibilities for furthering the implementation of Agenda 21 following the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; enabling the progress of the current UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024); and supporting the Action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management (2017) in order to make UN operations and facilities more sustainable. The General Assembly also adopted resolution 72/224 on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. This resolution encouraged members and other relevant stakeholders to support developing countries in energy sector cooperation and increase energy efficiency for clean, low-carbon, modern and sustainable energy systems and underscored the need for cleaner and more efficient cooking and heating methods.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is also a global leader on the issue of sustainable energy and works to implement General Assembly's high-level recommendations. The UNDP created the "Delivering Sustainable Energy in a Changing Climate: Strategy Note on Sustainable Energy (2017-2021)" (2016), which fully articulates the role of UNDP in the UN's work towards sustainable energy, and advocates for integrated "energy market transformation" by multiple stakeholders across sectors. The UNDP assists countries aiming for energy sustainability through supporting the holistic development of various energy and production sectors at the local, national, regional, and global levels. The UNDP also rejects stand-alone technology and industrial interventions in favor of complete solutions and unified approaches, as they state that energy is the "central factor of humanity."

The United Nations Environment Agency (UNEA) is particularly active on the topic of affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy, and has supported stakeholder's financial contributions into renewable energy through providing targeted financial support and technical assistance. This support is key, as it was determined by the UNEA that the global investment in energy is growing immensely, and it is necessary to now develop the of technical skills and the overall mobilization of climate investment through targeted initiatives in order to fully take advantage of this growth. As the impact of energy on climate is a key consideration in environmental policy, the UNEA also helps to mobilize the growth of clean and sustainable energy through investment contributions, which in turn helps governments achieve their national goals.

On a regional level, the UN Economic Commission for Europe has a Committee on Sustainable Energy, which works to make the affordability and accessibility to energy for all persons as well as reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This is done by producing resources and recommendations which are published and then given to policymakers in order to further their

monitoring of their own carbon usage. The Committee also works to guide work standards in regard to natural gas, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. Though this is a European endeavor, the Committee is encouraging all stakeholders to become more proactive in the sustainability effort of clean energy and infrastructure, and the project presents a model example of the results of regional collaboration.

Sustainable Energy for Vulnerable Populations

Vulnerable populations, such as women, low-income persons, and rural persons are more likely to face difficulties with accessing affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy due to lack of infrastructure, capacity, and proper resources. According to the World Bank, energy is determined to be a pivotal factor in education, healthcare, and the economy, and eradicating poverty. Currently, about 12% of the world's population consumes only 1% of the total global energy; this inequity is detrimental to health, education, and social & economic growth. These groups often have to travel long distances from their home in order to access energy, with the result being that many reside in urban slums as their only option. Individuals who live in urban areas due to insufficient energy infrastructure elsewhere are more likely to further sink into poverty as their economic deficits continue exacerbated by the lack of energy to power daily tasks essential to live even in urban areas. Additionally, due to increased exposure to harmful byproducts and air pollution of non-renewable energy sources such as wood, charcoal, coal, dung, and waste on open fires, millions of people suffer from health issues associated with respiratory, cardiovascular, and other illnesses.

In addition to the challenges of achieving access to energy, many women and girls are also denied the opportunity to learn about or contribute to the advancement of energy. Women suffer from the lack of educational opportunities and accessibilities to basic needs such as health care, job opportunities, and adequate pay, which is often not attainable without clean energy. Vulnerable populations who have access to sustainable, reliable, and affordable energy throughout their schooling are typically better equipped to enter the workforce and achieve a high quality of life.

Promoting Sustainable Energy

Over the last few decades, the demand for energy has increased dramatically; however, an increasing number of energy alternatives have also become more feasible and affordable. Through increasing access to electricity, reducing reliance on non-renewable energy resources, research on clean energy, technology transfer, and foreign direct investment, the targets under SDG 7 regarding innovation in the field of energy research may become achievable. The use of wind, solar, and thermal energy sources are on the rise, albeit still at a lower level of popularity than traditional fossil fuels. Costa Rica is currently on track for 100% of its power coming from national resources due to government investment in hydro, wind and geothermal resources; Kenya has become the first country in Africa to use geothermal power and currently has the highest number of solar power systems in the world installed per capita; and Afghanistan has been partnering with German development agencies to install solar power across the northern provinces and build small-scale hydro plants.

Civil society organizations and interagency partnerships such as the Secretary General's Sustainable Energy for All (SEforAll) initiative also play a pivotal role in supporting the move towards accessible, affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy. SEforAll is a global initiative that works to support the core objectives of the SDG 7. These objectives included the ability to ensure global accessibly to present-day energy services, multiplying the share of renewable energy in the global energy assortment, and expanding the world-wide rate of improvement in energy efficiency. SEforAll works with world leaders and their respective governments, the private sector, and civil society leaders. To date, more than 100 countries have shown their support by engaging with the organization through donations, building national strategies, and promoting future investment plans to deliver SEforAll's main objectives. Since its inception in 1998, the UN Foundation has also made efforts to assist with both the Millennium Development Goals and SDGs, working along-side the office of the UN- Secretary General, the UNFCCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and SEforAll. Recently, SEforAll supported Tokelau, a small Polynesian territory in the central Pacific, in developing a national policy and strategy to increase energy efficiency through focusing on the renewable sector and partnering with New Zealand-based technology companies, which resulted in their surpassing the rest of the world in replacing fossil fuels.

Conclusion

Though incredible technological and diplomatic progress has been made towards ensuring affordable, sustainable, and reliable energy for all, there is still significant work that needs to be done to ensure global access to renewable and sustainable energy. There are still more than 1.2 billion people in the world without proper access to energy and renewable resources currently, and lack of access to energy can exacerbate poverty, marginalization, pollution, and undereducation.200 With the need to ensure equitable access to affordable, sustainable, and reliable energy remaining, the General Assembly Second committee must remain focused in developing feasible solutions to the issue.

Further Research

In considering how to improve access to sustainable and affordable energy, delegates should consider the following question: How can the General Assembly Second Committee further support existing UN initiatives for sustainable energy? In what ways can existing practices with sustainable energy be improved? How can energy be better attainable for vulnerable populations? How can the UN foster better partnerships with private organizations to further technology and innovation in the development of sustainable energy? How can the international community better support the development of accessible energy sources in low-income communities?

Annotated Bibliography

Sustainable Energy for All. (2018). The Organization [Website]. Retrieved 6 March 2018 from: https://www.seforall.org/our-mission
This website introduces the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, now run by former Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon. This independent organization aims to create partnerships between local, national, and regional agencies, and corporations. The ultimate goal of SEforAll is to promote access to clean and reliable energy, as well as encourage world leaders to come together to improve sustainability of the world, and it presents an excellent model of how innovate approaches can achieve this goal. This source will help guide delegates' research as it demonstrates some of the key work being done outside of the UN to achieve energy sustainability, and how the UN General Assembly Second could positively benefit from fostering inter- organization partnerships.

United Nations Foundation. (2013). What we do: Energy & Climate [Website]. Retrieved 7 March 2018 from: http://www.unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/energy-and-climate/
This source explains the importance of energy and the direct correlation it has in regard to climate change. This is also a useful resource to understand what actions the UN has taken to ensure clean, reliable, sustainable energy, and also includes key statistical data in relation to SDG 7. This website discusses the impact of energy and climate other sectors as well, such as women and children, global health, and other sectors, which will be useful for contextualizing delegates' further research.

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