



OXFORD INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

**14TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
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Chair:

David Collomb

davidcollomb2457@googlemail.com

Vice-Chair:

Alexander Henzl

alexander.henzl@gmail.com

Committee email:

unep@oximun.org

United Nations Environment Programme

Topic A: Tackling poverty and inequality through a sustainable economy

Topic B: Tackling the issue of desertification

A Message from your Dais:

Dear Delegates,

A very warm welcome to the beginning of your preparations for Oxford International Model United Nations 2016! It is truly admirable that you will be convening along with the rest of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for what promises to be...no, needs to be a constructive session this November.

The topics you will be dealing with during the UNEP simulation are just 2 of the most pressing environmental issues our generation and the next will face this century. We will be looking to hear some inventive ideas and analysis of the problems that the topics present. These should be used to develop a resolution to these urgent tribulations through your country's diplomacy. Above all, we hope that you will enjoy your time at OxIMUN and improve your diplomatic and problem solving skills for use in the future.

The quality and insightfulness of this debate will lie in your hands. Prepare well and we will see you in November!

Alexander Henzl and David Collomb

Introduction to the committee

The United Nations Environment Programme was established in 1972 from the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. It initially looked after the environment on a more physical level as opposed to linking it to any human social factors. In the 1980s the social-environmental linkages started to be made and the committee began to take into account social issues such as gender equality and how environmental degradation affects the wellbeing of humans (UNEP, 2015). The UNEP developed from a proposal to create a body to act as an environmental conscience of the UN.

The UNEP today deals with assessing environmental trends, developing environmental instruments, and strengthening institutions for the wise management of the environment. UNEP has also been active in funding and implementing environment related development projects. (UNEP, 2015) Since its inception some notable achievements have been:

- The Solar Loan Program, helping over 100,000 people finance solar power systems in India alone with the project expanding to other suitable countries (UNEP, 2007)¹.
- The Marshlands project in the Middle East which seeks to "manage the marshland in an environmentally sound manner" (UNEP, 2009)².
- The SEAN-CC network to guide ASEAN countries making sound policy, technology, and investment choices that lead to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and potential co-benefits (UNEP 2010).



Figure 1 - Image showing the extent of the change in marshland area over time

Topic A: *Tackling poverty and inequality through a sustainable economy*

Introduction to the Agenda

The 21st century presents us with some of the largest environmental changes our race has seen in recorded history. While nations have been developing there are situations where inequality - such as income - among the population has increased, as exemplified by numerous developing countries in Asia and Africa. Notable countries include India and China as per the International Monetary Fund. A measure of inequality is the GINI coefficient. The coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, 0 being equal while 1 being unequal. The Chinese GINI coefficient has increased between 1990 and 2013, a period where it experienced dynamic growth (IMF 2013). This is just one of many developing nations experiencing this trend. Warnings from the IMF point towards greater inequality having a negative effect on the country's future economy³. So a country may choose to alter its development to tackle this. But, development in select spheres such as wage growth or income equality alone will not be enough to circumvent the basket of other problems a country (and also the world) faces. The environment can easily be jeopardized for the sake of short-term benefits or even long-term - yet focused on just one issue - benefits. With an urgent tone of warnings coming from the scientific and economic communities about the negative effects linked to unsustainable behaviour and short term planning, the international community needs to start thinking about what it needs to do next. The definition of poverty makes solving the problem that bit more difficult. A globally defined standard of extreme poverty can be found in a past resolution from the General Assembly (UN General Assembly A/RES/70/1)⁴. For UNEP, poverty is more closely defined as the deprivation of social, economic, and environmental related services (UNEP, 2015). Inequality as well has a loose definition. A UN document on the concepts of inequality published in 2015 is a good place to start but its definition will be shaped by a country's ethos as well as that of the UN (UN DESA, 2015)⁵.

Since the establishment of the Millennium goals set by the UN, an issue such as this topic will revolve around factoring in these targets. Goals heavily referring to sustainable development, such as goal 10, should be among the most important (UN Millennium Goals, 2016). The concept of sustainable development can follow the definition laid out by the report, *Our Common Future*. Directly from *Our Common Future*: "*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own*

needs". Overall, the topic can be tackled from a wide range of angles so innovation on current definitions and work mixed in with effective diplomacy will grant a resolution success.

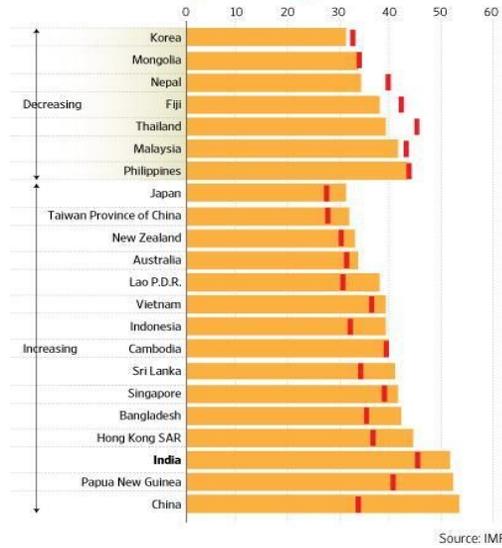


Figure 2 - Shows the Inequality change in Asia between 1990 (Marked by the red line) and 2013 (marked by the orange line)

History of the problem

UNEP Inception and the Physical Environment

As mentioned previously, from its inception UNEP has focused more on the physical environmental aspect of sustainable development. In this spirit it helped to create the Montreal Protocol in 1987, which aimed to protect the Ozone layer by phasing out the use of substances responsible for Ozone depletion. Of course, even with this ambitious protocol the hole in the Ozone layer was widening until a notice of levelling off (NASA, 2014).

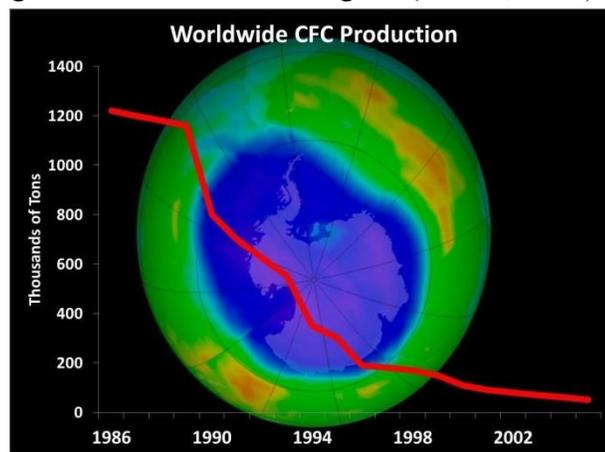


Figure 3 - A graph showing the Ozone layer ability since 1979. As can be noticed, the problem would have become clear by the early 1980s.⁶

A link could be made between the reduction in the Ozone layer and the amount of Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) released, as can be seen by comparing figures 3 and 4. Naturally, there will be a delay between the release of CFCs and the decrease in Ozone concentration. The Vienna convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer was signed by some of the largest CFC producing nations which paved the way for negotiations to regulate the CFC production. What does this have to do with sustainable development? *Our Common Future* defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Our Common Future, 1987). The loss of our Ozone would reduce the ability of future generations to meet their own needs due to a tougher environment. The protocol faced major opposition from the CFC industry.

The Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy (which was representing producer DuPont, a chemicals and materials company) was arguing that the science was too uncertain. The DuPont chair in 1988 wrote to the US senate that "we will not produce a product unless it can be made, used, handled and disposed of safely and consistent with appropriate safety, health and environmental quality criteria. At the moment, scientific evidence does not point to the need for dramatic CFC emission reductions. There is no available measure of the contribution of CFCs to any observed ozone change..."⁸ Other companies at the time joined in to dismissing the Ozone layer hypothesis.

Bodies including UNEP, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank set up a fund to assist developing countries to comply with the protocol's control measures. It follows from the Earth Summit "that countries have a common but differentiated responsibility to protect and manage the global commons" (Earth Summit, 1992). This problem isn't the only one, rising emissions in greenhouse gases are also a concern.

Sustainable development didn't stop there: its meaning started to include social and economic spheres as well as the physical environment sphere.

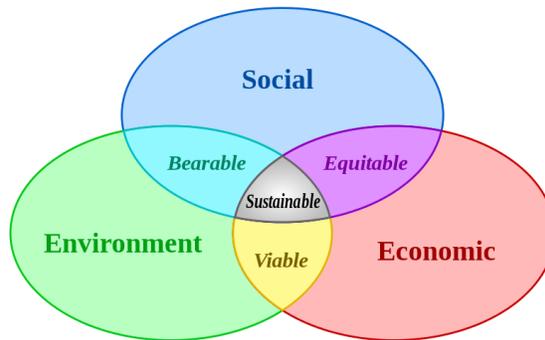


Figure 5 - Showing the combination of spheres of sustainability.

The Warnings Intensify

The 1990s saw some of the greatest increases in average temperature and weather-related natural disasters (UNEP 2013). The warnings were not just about the environment but also the social and economic spheres of humanity. The UN set out the Millennium Development Goals to increase the living standards and advance a human's capabilities (Millennium Development Goals, 2000). In 2002, the World Bank warned that the world was on track to halve poverty between 1990 and 2015.⁹ It also warned that with further development and trade there could be uneven development across the world if care is not taken. Examples of this included the decrease of life expectancy in sub-Saharan Africa mainly due to HIV/AIDs (World Bank 2002). In Southeast Asia inequality in spheres such as income and education were still high and getting worse - examples including school completion rates dropping (Journal of South East Asian Economies 2014). Along with uneven progress, another criticism for the Millennium Development Goals was that aid to developing countries had gone more to military aid and debt relief rather than assisting development. Clearing debts would have allowed heavily indebted countries to focus resources on meeting the goals. A strong criticism was that the goals did not only include justification behind the objectives but also did not include the voices of those that the goals were mainly targeting.¹⁰

UN Recent Actions

The UN built on the criticism of uneven global growth and the lack of inclusion of equality and equity to move to a new agenda, the post-2015 development agenda.

Recently the Millennium Development Goals were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals. This expanded the number of goals from 8 to 17 with the aim of making real the discussions from the resolution, *The Future We Want*.¹¹ The new goals factor in key themes

of poverty eradication, energy, water and sanitation, health, and human settlement. (Sustainable Development Goals - UN, 2015)



Figure 6 - The Sustainable Development goals which the UN works towards, each goal has numerous sub targets.

Discussion of the Problem

The Nature of Poverty

To be able to tackle the issue effectively is to understand the nature of poverty. Poverty can hold different forms; often one may first come across income as forming the backbone of the definition of poverty. Some key terms to differentiate between in income-related poverty are extreme poverty and relative poverty. Relative poverty is a situation in which income in consumption falls below a certain threshold established in relation to a country's income or consumption distribution. Poverty lines are then used to separate people into levels of poverty depending on their income. The level for extreme poverty is anyone earning less than 1.25 US Dollars a day set by the World Bank.

Other types of poverty may include:

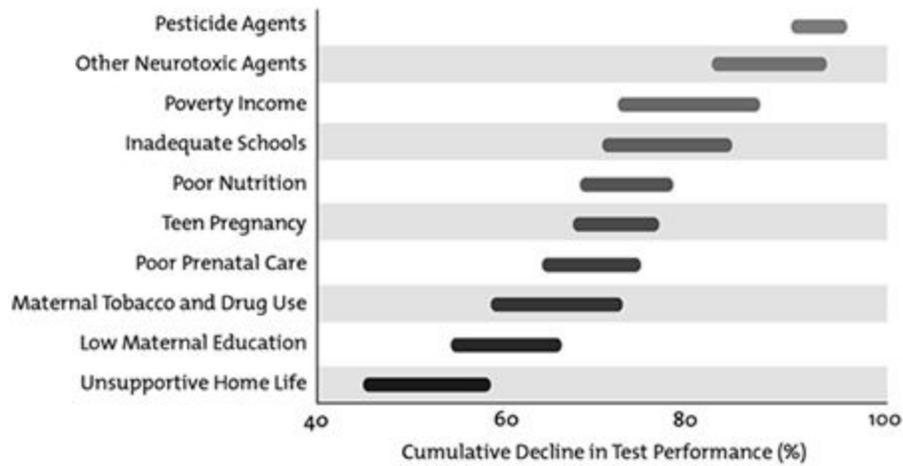
- Situational poverty: Where a crisis may cause a loss and can be temporary such as environmental and health disasters or familial like divorce.
- Generational poverty: Where at least two generations in a row are born into poverty and are not equipped to move out of their position.
- Absolute poverty: Some nations have greater of levels of this as others. This involves a scarcity of needs such as shelter, clean water and food.
- Urban poverty: Poverty related to housing and lifestyle in the city, such as noise, poor services, lack of access to transport and social stresses such as crowded and violence.
- Rural poverty: Involves those outside main metropolitan hubs who don't have access to good or equal quality education and either much-reduced or nonexistent access to service and transport.

The rural poverty rate is growing and has exceeded the urban rate every year since data collection began in the 1960s¹². The difference between the two poverty rates has averaged approximately 5 percent for the last 30 years, with urban rates between 10 and 15% and rural rates between 15 and 20% (Jolliffe, 2004). Each country will have its own level of the varied types of poverty so the solution is always complex to solve on a global scale. With this, the Sustainable Development Goals are criticised due to its goals being too vague and targets not being altered to meet the situations of nations or smaller communities.

Poverty takes effect

With any type of poverty comes a reduction of human capabilities. This reduction brings less production from a country and hence less development, making any reinvestment into development all the more difficult for lack of funds. The question whether a country should seek to increase or decrease its GDP growth is a frequent one. Might pursuing high levels of growth hinder the ecological objectives of a country?¹³

Educational poverty weakens the work force and therefore reduces the efficiency of a country's economy. Education is long-lasting and can be passed down through generations making it an important target for sustainable development. One of the previous millennium goals was linked with completion rates of primary education. All ranges of poverty have been shown to negatively affect the education of the young generation. By increasing completion rates of primary education, it allows families to move out of generational poverty and into the higher bands of income. A positive example is Brazil, where better access to education has enabled households to move into higher wages.¹⁴



According to this study, each of these factors represents a “risk cost” of 5–15 percent. The factors are correlative, not causal, but taken together they result in a precipitous drop in test performance.

Figure 7 - Highlighting the effects of poverty in households and academic performance and hence success in the education system in the USA.¹⁵

In developed countries the rate of extreme poverty has increased, such as the United States where levels of extreme poverty doubled between 1996 and 2011.¹⁶

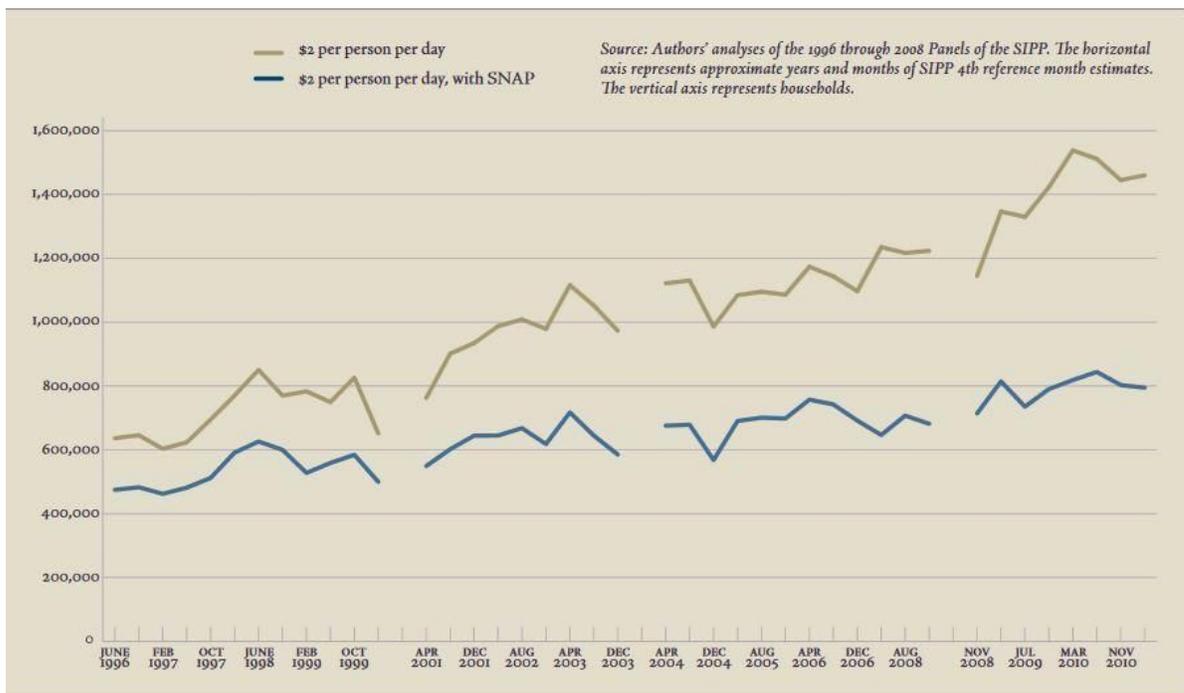


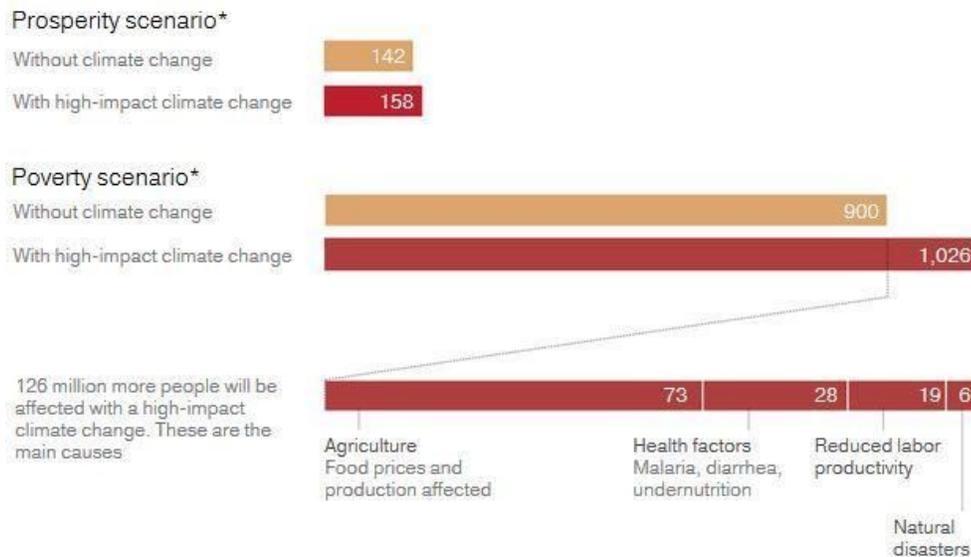
Figure 8 - Shows the level of households with children in extreme poverty in the US (National Poverty Centre 2011).

Linking with the environment

The list of effects can go on, but its link with the environment is important when tackling the issue of sustainability. The change in climate and the rise in sea levels will affect economies more dependent on agriculture. It will also affect countries who are low lying and at threat from the increasing sea levels. With the onset of drought, desertification, and changing ecosystems, crops will be harder to grow. This will risk plunge more people into poverty and weaken the local economy. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identifies that poorer economies already find it harder to tackle issues - due to lack of resources and organization - of climate change which only aggravates the situation for them (IPCC 1995). This is not to mention that poorer communities also have less resources to cope with the damage making situational poverty even worse. Furthermore, income inequality widens the effect of climate change between those in developing and developed countries. Morris' study on the impact of Hurricane Mitch shows that the lowest income quintile lost 40% of crop value and 18% of asset value whilst those in the higher quintiles lost 5% and 3% respectively. (Morris et al 2002). Following the causality and applying by case the effects of poverty described above one can see the disastrous effects of a changing environment on a country. One could call climate change regressive, damaging the rich but devastating the poor.

Some countries are disproportionately affected by climate change compared to others. This highlights a more natural inequality on a global level which the UN should mitigate. Such examples of countries who are more hit by climate change include those bordering desert regions or those with already unreliable access to water. Mozambique, Chad, Spain, and Ghana are just examples of a handful of countries victim to this. With increased temperatures agricultural roles (such a farming and fishing) will become harder. Such change will lead to a wealth of problems, from more time spent on labour and less on education for the young to lower output and a reduction wealth.

Number of people in extreme poverty, in millions

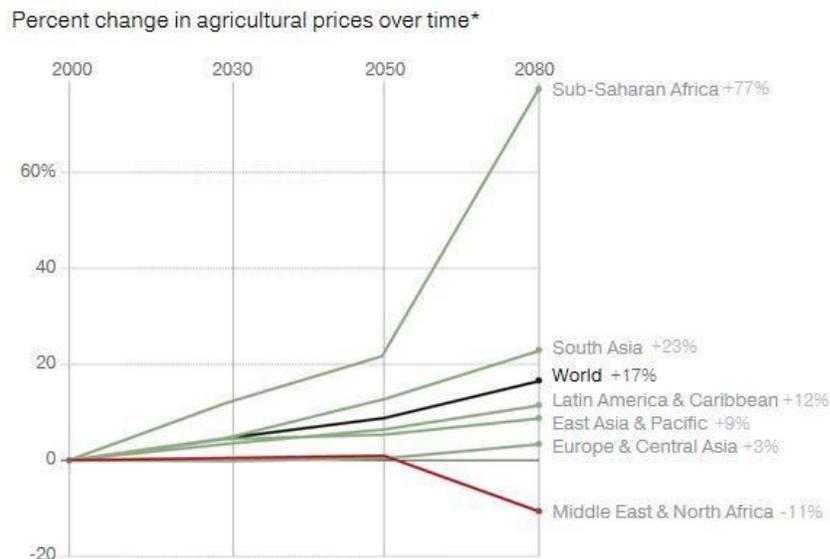


*Scenarios developed based on different social and economic policies

NG STAFF

SOURCES: WORLD BANK; ROZENBERG AND HALLEGATTE

Figure 9 - Graph showing the effect on poverty from climate change.



*Estimated under a pessimistic development scenario

NG STAFF

SOURCES: WORLD BANK; HAVLÍK ET AL.

Figure 10 - Graph showing the impact of climate change on agriculture per region.

The environment and sustainability

The overall impact of change in the environment can be severe. As mentioned previously, it can affect climate-sensitive industries such as agriculture. It can also cause a chain of consequences resulting in more poverty and hence a weaker economy.

The problems don't stop there. The change in ecosystems will mean a wide range of issues have a direct affect on first population working in agriculture and living in non-urban areas. This then affects the urban population. A change in ecosystems can reduce livestock survival as a direct result in change of climate and an indirect result from the easier spread of diseases. This will also affect humans because the spread of major diseases such as malaria will increase. A greater population under worse health condition will reduce capabilities and hence the economy. More obvious but disastrous effects are the loss of low-lying lands. Island countries such as Bangladesh and the Maldives are likely to suffer the most in the future leaving succeeding generations with a tougher situation.

Other problems include those mentioned previously such as the effect on agriculture and the threat of increasing natural hazards. This forces governments to use their budget and aid to mitigate the effect of a changing environment. This results in less resources spent on development - creating an unsustainable budget. See Topic B for information on desertification, another unwanted effect on the environment. Even developed countries in a less volatile environments may notice effects such as increasing frequency and intensity of heat waves. These can fatally affect the most vulnerable like the elderly or the sick. The potential effects of environmental change does not stop there. For long-term development, it should therefore be the aim of nations to mitigate the effects of climate change and ideally halt it.

Inequality

The Rio+20 summit has equality at its focus: both income equality and horizontal equality. Horizontal equality includes gender and ethnic equality. Not included in the summit is Vertical inequality. Vertical inequality includes income and economics of families. Developed countries may face more issues with vertical inequality while developing nations may face issues with one or both. There have been calls for growth in all countries to become more inclusive so that no one is left behind and therefore everyone can contribute to the economy in the future.

Women account for 70% of those living below the poverty line in extreme poverty.¹⁸ The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF - a wilderness preservation group) further highlights the differences in the way women may use and access resources. It acknowledges that understanding

and using the difference between the poverty line and extreme poverty may bolster a local economy. Furthermore, empowering women through education and equal access to resources as men will increase their capabilities and contribution to the economy. If women are given proper education and equipment, then it makes their role in the economy more sustainable as they will then be able to nurture the following generation.

In developing nations, there are warnings of rising inequality. In the UK, for example, the country's earnings are increasingly concentrated in small pockets of people while the rest remain stagnant in wage growth (as indicated by the figure below).

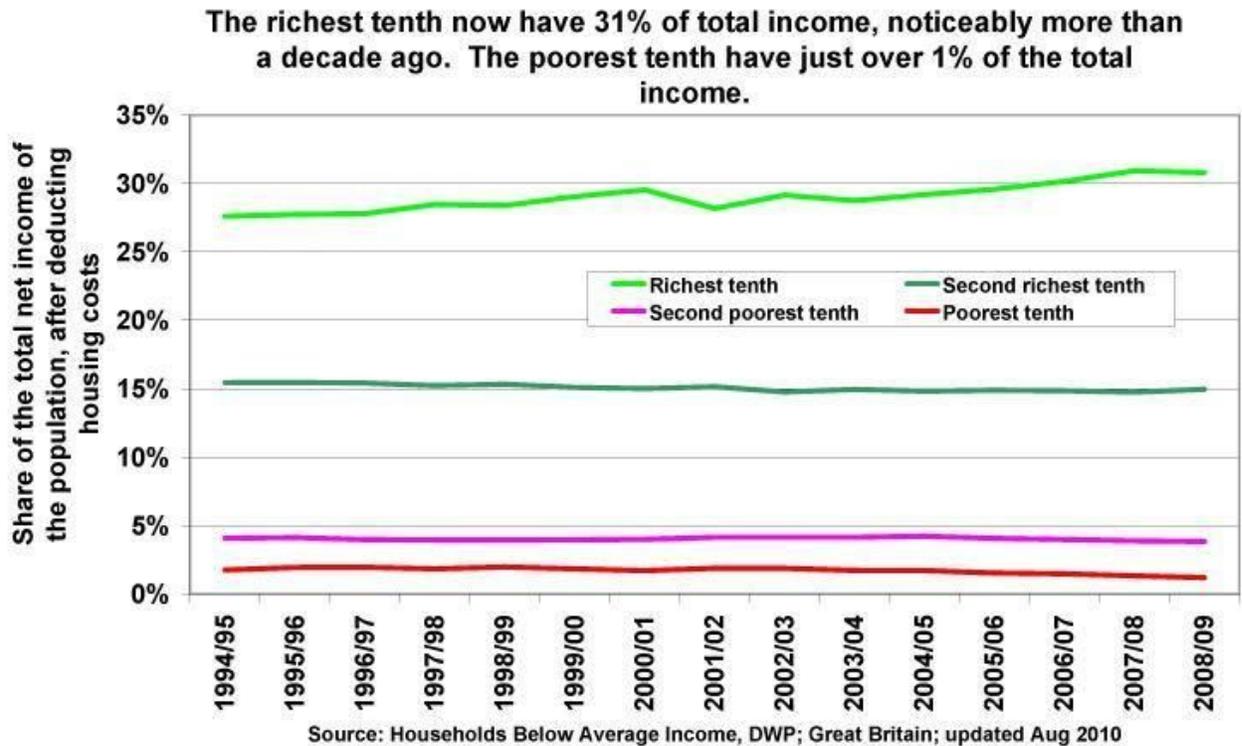


Figure 11 - The graph shows the increasing disparity between income growths in the UK.

Limited wage growth from a larger part of the population may result in less purchasing power among this population and therefore a negative effect on growth. This may also negatively affect government budgets, especially in certain European states where the reliance on income and consumption tax is high (OECD 2014). Having a smaller disposable budget may make it less sustainable as it won't be able to spend adequately on development. This also extends to any extensive welfare system: should wage growth worsen and costs go up then more people will fall into the system which becomes a greater, less sustainable cost for government budget. With this,

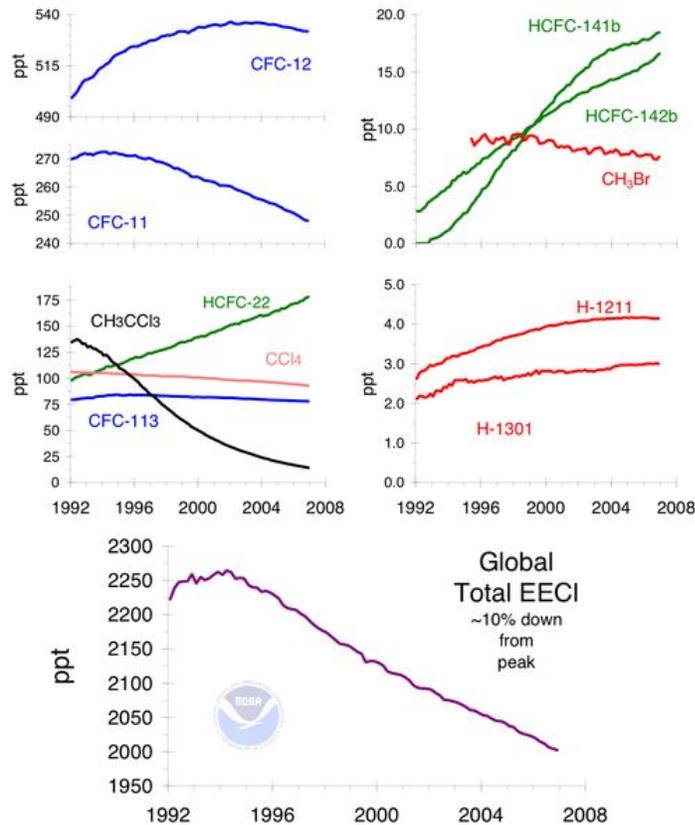
it may be advisable for western European nations to focus on creating a sustainable budget which should directly pass onto the populace.

Some developing nations such as Bangladesh and Singapore may be following close by European states in levels of inequality which will risk the capabilities of the population being left behind. The IMF points to a reduction in productivity due to inequality. One can simply follow a chain to show the negative impacts of lower productivity.¹⁷ Overall, reducing inequality and a sustainable economy go hand in hand and should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

Future actions

The Physical environment and development

The CFC problem is still not over. Even though there has been a net decrease of CFCs, now Hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) are thought to contribute to the effect of global warming. They are 10000 times more potent than greenhouse gases, and their usage has



increased since the Montreal protocol.

Figure 12 - The figure shows the increase in HCFCs compared to other CFCs, however a net decrease in overall CFCs.²⁰

As many countries still rely on the usage of HCFCs, finding an alternative that does not aggravate poverty or inequality is key to fixing this situation. To increase efficiency and decrease the chance of further issues, policy experts have advocated that protecting the Ozone layers and the climate be linked together.¹⁹ The success of the Montreal Protocol should be built on to further reduce the level of Ozone-depleting substances.

Straightforward solutions include the usage of renewable and less polluting energy sources such as solar and wind power, which may reduce the impact of climate change. Using renewable sources will also provide more sustainable energy production as opposed to equally viable alternatives such as nuclear power or even biofuel. This is because nuclear power is not renewable and will inevitably run out, so relying on it will not be sustainable. Biofuel, although renewable, still emits pollutants such as greenhouse gases.

A Green Economy

The Rio+20 conference had two themes, one of which was the introduction of a green economy for sustainable development and poverty eradication (Rio+20, 2012). Here, a green economy has been defined as "[a]n economy that results in improved human well being, and social equity while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological sacrifices". This definition is close to the definition of sustainable development but with a stronger link to the environment.

A green economy as set out by UNEP is an economy that grows in income and employment, driven by public and private investments. To go along with that it should also reduce greenhouse emissions, reduce environmentally and socially damaging pollution, increase efficiency for resources, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation.

With such an abstract concept there are many ways to implement policies and bring about change, likely resulting in a rigorous debate. Nonetheless, the end goal is to eradicate poverty and inequality through this concept. A green economy could have different dimensions. Policies could affect the economics, social and environmental dimensions of a country. Economic policies may for example force a shift away from profit driven markets while environmental policies may look to preserve ecosystems and biodiversity. A green economy in the end seeks to 'decouple' the environmental impact and resource use from economic growth and human well being such that the latter set of two no longer affect the first two (UNEP 2011).

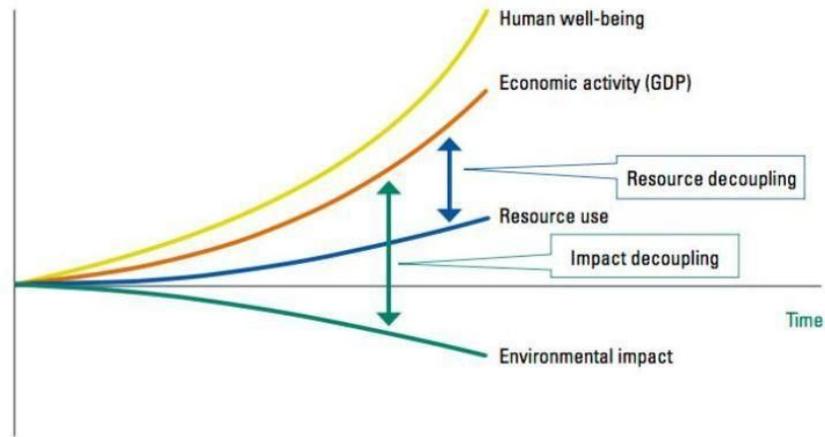


Figure 13 - Abstract graph showing the aspects of decoupling to UNEP (UNEP 2011)

Possible Policy Changes

As mentioned earlier in the discussion of a green economy, implementing changes can be done mostly by policy changes. Here are listed of some examples of future policy changes to tackle poverty and inequality through a sustainable or green economy.

Some countries such as western European ones already have a progressive tax system, where those who earn higher amounts will be taxed at higher rates than those in the lowest income bracket. This starts to take care of vertical inequality and can easily incorporate horizontal equality. There are still many countries however who do not use a progressive tax system. Though it should be kept in mind that it may not be beneficial for a country to use such a system.

What may be more important is the way a budget is distributed. The OECD suggests that redistribution of money from taxes should focus on families and the youth of the population to ensure longevity and continuity, hence creeping closer to a sustainable economy.²¹ Some critics claim that this would push lower income groups away from attempting to improve their situation due to the state being there as an insurance. Hence policies need to act to be constructive as opposed to creating a dependence. Further issues may be that it lessens the incentive to work for people paying higher taxes.

Unemployment itself contributes to inequality and poverty. Unemployment can be reduced by:

1. Government-sponsored job creation schemes.
2. A monetary or fiscal stimulus to aggregate demand.
3. Active labour market policies to increase employability, such as re-training schemes.
4. General *Welfare-to-work* schemes can encourage labour market participation.

Guaranteeing basic rights for all will greatly reduce horizontal inequality and endow more of the population with more capabilities. The result is a benefit to the economy.

Finally, nations could consider putting sustainable development goals with their own specific targets. These policy changes are by no means the limit, and creativity should be used to devise adequate policies to create a sustainable economy.

Bloc Positions

The following bloc positions are rough guides to the positions that some countries may make. Some countries within these blocs may not hold entirely the same position as the rest, and further research outside of this guide is needed for a detailed position from a country.

OECD Nations

OECD nations monitor their economic progress carefully using a wide range of statistics and attempt to maintain their economy through reference to these values. The OECD countries will be the main donors to developing nations as per the development goals set out by the UN . Their interests in terms of poverty and inequality may be different compared to the remainder of nations. For example, absolute poverty in the United States is much lower than in many other countries. Therefore, the United States should focus instead on relative and situational poverties. As mentioned earlier in the guide, levels of extreme poverty were on the rise which may well become one of the foremost issues to be solved by these nations.

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa)

Brazil, India, and China have been praised for their ability to reduce poverty in their countries significantly since the Millennium Development Goals. China had managed to reduce the number of people in poverty to 278 million in 2012 from 500 million in 1981²². Some experts have attributed this success to certain pathways: agriculture-led, social protection– and nutrition intervention–led, or a combination of both of these approaches. Although, the BRICS nations still have a lot of work to do in terms of poverty and inequality. Inequality being the greater cause for concern, where it has either risen or not seen a substantial enough change. As major contributors to the world stage, the policies of BRICS nations are key to the issue of climate change. The new demands of these countries has resulted in some of them having increased interest in the development of their neighbors and searching for resources to feed their large growth, such as Indian interest in Hydroelectricity in the Nepalese Himalayas.

Latin American Bloc

Latin American countries have formed numerous blocs to help their development, ranging from the more known Banco del sur to the Pacific Alliance which enables cooperation between these countries to work towards greener economies. Further north, the Caribbean community within the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) has formed a green economy initiative to promote the development of a green economy between themselves. Certain countries such as Cuba have performed well in meeting some of the targets of the UN development goals related to improvement in medical and educational facilities, a model which other countries may be able to mimic²³.

African Nations

A large handful of its member states will be and currently are being disproportionately affected by climate change (as mentioned earlier in the guide). These countries are often on the receiving end of aid by developed nations and in some spheres have a long way to go to reach a sustainable economy and eradicate poverty. Between them there are numerous attempts, such as the Climate Change and Development in Africa conference, to help each other develop more sustainable economies and eradicate levels of extreme poverty and both horizontal and vertical inequality.

Middle Eastern Nations

The Middle Eastern countries are a distance from achieving some of their sustainable development targets²³. With the threat of Islamic State, a seemingly cold conflict between certain Gulf states, and other conflicts throughout the area, the implementation of the Goals has become much harder. The Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) is made of governments, corporations, and other bodies from 48 countries. They hold an annual conference to discuss green finance and how it can drive sustainable consumption and production in the Arab region. Other bodies among many in the region include the Middle East Centre for Sustainable Development, thus showing that the Middle East is not ignoring the issue. Other problems lie in the lack of diversity of some of these countries' economies.

Points Resolutions Could Address

The following list is a set of recommended points that a potential future UNEP resolution should address. The list is by no means exhaustible as countries find their own matters to deal with and include in any potential resolutions.

- Can the United Nations provide a set definition for poverty and inequality for all nations to work by for their development?
- Can UNEP build upon previous protocols and resolutions such as the Montreal Protocol to better tackle Inequality and Poverty?
- How and if the United Nations can monitor nations' (developing and developed) progress in terms of their sustainable development and attempts at reducing poverty and inequality?
- Should the United Nations regulate harmful compounds and can they sustainably compensate these changes in the economy?
- How can the United Nations advise nations to move towards alternative more sustainable economies? Further to this, what alternatives can it advise or help on to reduce inequality and poverty while remaining sustainable?
- Could the current UN sustainable development goals be altered in any way to assist in a country's development according to its current stage of development?
- Are there any further supporting groups or committees which UNEP can suggest to smoothen the process towards global sustainable development?
- Can the UN use the concept of a Green Economy as basis for future development? And what policies should be implemented?
- In what way may the United Nations finance and administer future projects?
-

Further Reading

The following list will provide you with extra information you may need to use throughout the debate:

- **ECOSOC document on sustainable economy:**

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.17/1995/14&Lang=E

- **UN report on poverty trends:**

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/docs/2010/chapter2.pdf>

- **UNEP explorer to view UN datasets which may be useful to your country:**

<http://geodata.grid.unep.ch/>

- **UN DESA paper on equality:** http://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2006/wp26_2006.pdf

- **Useful background information on UNEP dated 2009:**

<http://www.unep.org/PDF/UNEPOrganizationProfile.pdf>

- **Main UN document on sustainable development, Our Common Future:**

<http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

- **For an expanded reading on the definition of sustainable development:**

<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/what-is-sustainable-development.html>

- **Definitions which will be helpful for discussion on the issue:**

http://www.unep.org/resourcepanel/Portals/50244/documents/IRP_Draft_Glossary.pdf

- **Further reading in BRICS policies and sustainable development:**

<http://www.sgi-network.org/brics/pdf/BRICS%20Executive%20Summary%20EN.pdf>

- **An example of UNEP activity - the SEAN-CC network:**

<http://unep.org/climatechange/mitigation/sean-cc/SEANCCHome/tabid/7110/Default.aspx>

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