

BACKGROUND MATERIALS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SECOND COMMITTEE

Prepared by: Kyle Callen and Caitlin Hopper
Contributions by: Andria Marsh



General Assembly Second Committee

Committee Mandate

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative body and one of the principal organs of the United Nations. It was established in 1945 by Chapter IV of the *Charter of the United Nations* and is comprised of all 193 UN Member States. The GA's broad membership enables it to engage in unique high-level diplomacy and the Charter allows the GA to consider and take action on almost any topic, including political, economic, humanitarian, social, and legal issues.¹ The GA expresses the will of the international community in the form of written resolutions that, while not legally binding, set the policy direction for the UN as an organization and can influence Member States and regional organizations. These resolutions sometimes take direct action, but it is far more common that they lay out a set of policies or, in the case of legal resolutions, international norms. The development of these resolutions takes a significant amount of time, as disagreements on policy are common, so the work of the GA is broken up into six subsidiary committees.

The General Assembly Second Committee

The General Assembly Second Committee is the Economic and Financial committee of the GA. It is the principle committee for addressing development and economic policy, including but not limited to international trade, sustainable development, globalization, and the eradication of poverty.² As a main committee of the GA, it is comprised of all 193 UN Member States, each having a single vote; no states receive special veto authority or weighted voting based on any financial contributions. The work of Second Committee almost exclusively focuses on economic and development policy, with budgetary and finance discussions being relegated to the General Assembly Fifth Committee.³ The committee often seeks to highlight or harmonize the work of the UN with other international development bodies, including the World Trade Organization and international financial institutions, and to ensure that actions undertaken throughout the UN system are of the maximum developmental benefit for Member States.⁴ The nature of the topics addressed by Second Committee have made it one of the most collaborative committees of the GA; the committee adopts a majority of its draft resolutions by consensus or without a recorded vote.

Reporting

Unlike some other GA committees, Second Committee has no direct subsidiary bodies or commissions with which it has a special relationship.⁵ Topics relevant to its area of work are often placed on the committee's agenda by the General Assembly or by the committee itself. Delegates in Second Committee debate a topic and develop a working paper which can then be

¹ United Nations General Assembly, "Functions and powers of the General Assembly," n.d.

² United Nations General Assembly, "Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)," n.d.

³ United Nations General Assembly, "Administrative & Budgetary (Fifth Committee)," n.d.

⁴ United Nations General Assembly, "Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee)," n.d.

⁵ Ibid.

adopted as a draft resolution by majority vote of the committee. Draft resolutions are then passed on to the General Assembly Plenary. Some Member States lack adequate staff to have representatives at every committee session or informal debate; more Member States review and vote on draft resolutions in plenary sessions than in committee sessions. Draft resolutions that receive majority support in plenary session are adopted as resolutions and then represent the will of the majority of the international community on a given issue.

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General Assembly Second Committee

Topic A: Women in Development

“How can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feel welcome to participate in the conversation?”⁶

–Emma Watson

Introduction

Among the purposes and principles of the United Nations (UN) established by the *Charter of the United Nations* is the duty of the international community to promote higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development for all.⁷ Economic development is often at the forefront of the work of the UN, with almost 70% of the programmatic work done within the UN system centering on promoting economic and social development.⁸ Despite this, women are often excluded from the development narrative and from fully enjoying the benefits of economic and social development.⁹ For example, according to the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), only about one in two women take part in employment for pay or profit.¹⁰ Many women have fewer chances to participate in the labor force because they undertake three times more unpaid domestic work than men.¹¹ In order to address these concerns, the international community, particularly the General Assembly Second Committee, examines the impact of inequitable development as well as the role women play in economic and social development.

Background:

The topic of women’s rights and their role in international development has long been an issue of discussion within the UN and there are a number of foundational documents that promote women and their rights. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) is the foundational human rights document of the UN and was drafted with gender-neutral language in order to ensure that the principles within could apply to all peoples.¹² The UDHR, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR), and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) are together the International Bill of Human Rights, and guarantee a basic set of rights, including economic rights, for all people regardless of sex.¹³

⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, “Emma Watson: Gender equality is your issue too,” 2014.

⁷ United Nations Conference on International Organization, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945.

⁸ United Nations Department Economic and Social Affairs, “About economic and social development,” 2018.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ United Nations Capital Development Fund, “Inclusive and Equitable Local Development,” 2018.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United Nations General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. A/RES/217A. 1948.

¹³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Fact Sheet No. 2 (Rev.1), The International Bill of Human Rights*, n.d.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the international community began addressing emerging issues on development, including rural development, agriculture, family planning, and the impact of scientific and technological advances. It also began to recognize the importance of advancing women's participation in these fields to lift them from poverty and allow access to better education, healthcare, and the formal economy.¹⁴ In 1979, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) was adopted by the General Assembly.¹⁵ Throughout its 30 articles, it works to define what discrimination against women is and lays out an agenda for national and international action to end discrimination.

There have been four United Nations World Conferences on Women, the fourth of which resulted in the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.¹⁶ The *Beijing Declaration* highlights the importance of equal participation in development and promotes principles of cultural diversity and shared power across genders.¹⁷ It also lays out 12 "critical areas of concern" in regards to development including poverty, education and training, economic inequality, access to resources, women in decision making, and the environment.¹⁸ The subsequent world conferences on women have all focused on follow-up to the *Beijing Declaration*.¹⁹ These follow-up conferences concluded in 2015 with ECOSOC requesting that the CSW review and appraise the implementation of the Platform for Action.²⁰ This appraisal process will request that Member States perform comprehensive national reviews, and for regional commissions to undertake regional reviews.²¹

Current Situation:

The international community has worked for decades for women's empowerment but disparities in women's participation in development still exist. Education is vital for participation in development, but gender-based violence, sexual harassment, cultural and religious norms, child marriage, pregnancy, and a lack of access to reproductive healthcare are all standing in the way of reaching economic and educational parity for women and girls.²² Women looking to enter the labor force are given lower wages than their male counterparts, hold less secure jobs, and are subjected to poor working conditions, gendered stereotypes, and unequal division of domestic work.²³ Member States that have successfully advanced women's equality have seen great economics benefits.²⁴ By some estimates, advancements in women's equality could mean adding \$12 trillion to the global economy by 2025.²⁵

¹⁴ Commission on the Status of Women, "Short History of the Commission of the Status of Women," 2006.

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, A/RES/34/180, 1979.

¹⁶ United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, 1995.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, "Intergovernmental support," 2018.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² United Nations General Assembly, *Women in Development*, A/RES/70/256, 2016.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Woetzel, "How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth," *McKinsey & Company*, 2015.

²⁵ Ibid.

Recurrent economic crises, volatile food and energy prices, food insecurity, and climate change have increased vulnerability and inequality between peoples.²⁶ While global wealth continues to grow, the economic gap between financial classes continue to grow.²⁷ These effects are even more drastic for women and other vulnerable populations. Socio-economic status, geographic location, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability all compound upon each other as basis for discrimination and violence.²⁸

Women in Sustainable Development

Over the last few decades, the world has seen a shift towards focusing on sustainable and equitable development rather than pure economic growth, which was often the focus in decades prior. The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) developed *The Future We Want*, in which Member States committed, in part, to empower women as a means to achieve sustainable development.²⁹ It also calls for removal of barriers that prevent achieving women's full economic and political empowerment through legislative and administrative measures.³⁰ The 2015 adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set an entirely new path for international development and women's role therein.³¹ While all 17 goals involve some form of development and encourage women's participation, Goal 5 specifically works to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.³²

Since the adoption of the SDGs, many other organizations have been working on gender equality and involving women in development. By ensuring the involvement of women and girls across each of the 17 goals, the international community is working to ensure justice, inclusion, equitable economies, and sustaining the environment for present and future generations.³³ Working towards a greener economy and ending extreme poverty will create job opportunities and bolster the economy for all peoples, but existing stereotypes and segregation in labor markets may hinder women from becoming involved in green technology-centered employment.³⁴ Education and training, particularly in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math, must be improved in order to equip women and girls with the tools needed to succeed in a rapidly changing workforce.³⁵

²⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2016-2016: Executive Summary*, 2015.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ United Nations General Assembly, *The future we want*, A/RES/66/288, 2012.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ United Nations General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 2015.

³² United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, "Sustainable Development Goals," 2018.

³³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, "Women and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," 2018.

³⁴ United Nations General Assembly, *Women in Development*, A/RES/70/256, 2016.

³⁵ United Nations General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 2015.

Empowering Women in Development

The international community has developed and presented a number of strategy suggestions to assist Member States in bolstering the role of women in development. Member States have been urged to include gender equality and women's empowerment in national development strategies.³⁶ There has also been an emphasis on microfinance, capacity-building, and training for women to empower them and bolster national economies.³⁷ Women's entrepreneurship is also emphasized on the national level, as is providing women with business training, equal access to financial resources, information and communication technologies, networking and information-sharing, and increased participation in the formal economy.³⁸ In some economies, women's right to access such resources or engage in economic activity is severely limited, either culturally and sometimes legally, limiting their ability to contribute to the economy and development.

A number of UN bodies and programs work to ensure women's full and equal participation in government. The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was formed in 2010 to be the main UN organization that focuses on programs having to do with gender equality. UN Women promotes women's participation in leadership and governance; equal workforce rights; decent work, economic autonomy, and income security; and protection from violence.³⁹ UN Women has many different projects concerning women in development and partners with many different entities such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in order to ensure women have a role to play in development.

UN-Women has also created the UN Women Training Centre to provide high-quality training course, programs and resources on key issues related to UN Women's priorities as well as emerging topics.⁴⁰ The centers provide a multitude of services ranging from technical assistance, quality standards in training for gender equality, learning facilities to conduct face-to-face training, e-learning, to custom made training upon requests and their own pool of facilitators and training experts.⁴¹ This program provides women with a unique opportunity to learn skills outside of the home and will ultimately lead to them being able to get better jobs and contribute to their local economies to help raise themselves and the community out of poverty.

Currently, the UNCDF is collaborating with the UNDP and UN Women on a project called The Inclusive and Equitable Local Development Programme (IELD).⁴² This program addresses structural impediments that keep women from participating in the formal labor market and use local public and private investments for women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship.⁴³ For example, IELD works with local development groups and governments to create wells in areas that lack safe and sustainable access to water.⁴⁴ Building wells closer to

³⁶ United Nations General Assembly, *Women in Development*, A/RES/68/227, 2014.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ United Nations General Assembly, *Women in Development*, A/RES/70/256, 2016.

³⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, "About UN Women," 2018.

⁴⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, "Training Centre services," 2018.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² United Nations Capital Development Fund, "Inclusive and Equitable Local Development," 2018.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

the homes of individuals in the community will allow the retrieval of water to be expedited and easier, thus, cutting down the time it takes to get it and allowing a better opportunity to access education, healthcare, and the formal economy.⁴⁵ Retrieving water is a common task in many areas without local access to water, and in many cultures the task is principally carried out by women. Such unpaid labor can contribute significantly to the local and national economy but is often unaccounted for.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is often viewed as the principle indicator of economic health. GDP as a metric was developed nearly 80 years ago and is meant to measure the entire “economic production” of a country.⁴⁶ As the metric was being developed, it was suggested that unpaid labor, including cooking food and collecting firewood, be included, but it was ultimately left out.⁴⁷ Some estimates place this type of work at as much as 10% of GDP, and it has been shown that where this work is better valued and shared between men and women economic growth and development is accelerated.⁴⁸

Future Outlook:

Member States priorities vary throughout the world in regard to which areas of their community and their local economy to focus on improving. How to achieve SDG 5 and ensure economic equality to all women from all parts of the world regardless of culture, race, or status is the subject of ongoing debate. Increasing the amount of public private partnerships and resources provided for women could lead to more prosperity and success within Member States. Empowering women to have access to education and economic activities, including full access to all types of formal employment, can be hugely beneficial to economies at all levels. The General Assembly Second Committee will continue to discuss how to achieve these goals.

Focus Questions:

- What is your Member State’s current progress on SDG 5 and how does it want to see the SDGs implemented? What areas could use improvement?
- Does your country have equal pay for equal work policies in place? If not, what sort of barriers does your country face in implementing these policies? Would your country like to see such barriers removed globally?
- Does your State have development policies that increase access to women in the public and private sectors? Are these policies being implemented? What capacity issues or roadblocks does your country face in the implementation of these policies?
- Are there international bodies or programs that your State could help improve and allow better access for women to participate in?
- Are there policies or programs in your Member State’s regional group that affect women in development?

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Messac, “How Women’s Unpaid Work Was Nearly Included in GDP Calculations.” *News Deeply*, 2018.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, “Redistribute unpaid work,” n.d.

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Woetzel, Jonathan et al. “How advancing women’s equality can add \$12 trillion to global growth.” *McKinsey & Company*. September 2015. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/employment-and-growth/how-advancing-womens-equality-can-add-12-trillion-to-global-growth>.

General Assembly Second Committee

Topic B: Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Without biological resources, there would be no agriculture or life-saving medicine. Biological resources are necessary to all aspects of community, and therefore require diligent protection. Diversity amongst biological resources is similarly necessary to ensure that sustainable biological resources continue to be available to present and future generations. The *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD) defines biological diversity as “the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part: this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.”⁴⁹ Recognizing the intrinsic value of biological diversity to all aspects of life, the international community discussed it at great length during the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit or Rio Conference.⁵⁰ UNCED produced three non-binding documents, the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, *Agenda 21*, and the *Statement of Forest Principles*, and opened three legally binding documents for signature, namely the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification*, and the CBD.⁵¹ Since it entered into force in 1993, the CBD has been the guiding global document for protection and preservation of biodiversity.

Background

In response to a growing trend to focus on sustainability in the late 1980s, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) convened an Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Biological Diversity in November 1988.⁵² The purpose of this working group was to explore the need for an international convention on biological diversity; their outcome decision was in the affirmative. In May the following year, UNEP created the Ad Hoc Working Group of Technical and Legal Experts to prepare an international legally binding instrument that would safeguard the conservation and sustainable use of the world’s biological resources and protect global biological diversity.⁵³ The experts of the working group were given instruction to consider the need to share both the costs and benefits of biological diversity efforts, as well as “ways and means to support innovation by local people.”⁵⁴ As negotiations in drafting and agreeing to the content of convention progressed, the group became known as the International Negotiating Committee.⁵⁵

After completing seven negotiating sessions regarding the draft text, the International Negotiating Committee saw the culmination of its work on May 22, 1992, when the Convention

⁴⁹ Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention on Biological Diversity, *Convention on Biological Diversity*, May 22, 1992.

⁵⁰ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “History of the Convention,” n.d.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

was presented at the Nairobi Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁵⁶ Just two weeks later in June 1992, the newly adopted CBD was opened for signature at the Earth Conference.⁵⁷ The convention remained open for signature until June 4, 1993, by which time 168 countries had signed it.⁵⁸ Its entrance into force began on December 29, 1993, which was exactly 90 days after the 30th country ratified the provisions of the convention. At present, there are 196 countries party to the CBD, including all United Nations (UN) Member States except the United States of America, which has signed but not ratified or acceded to the convention.⁵⁹

The CBD and its Protocols

The CBD has three main objectives: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.⁶⁰ To reach these objectives the CBD calls upon States Parties to the convention to take several comprehensive actions to address biological diversity and the conservation of biological resources, such as the development of national strategies, plans, or programmes for the conservation of biological diversity; the identification and monitoring of components of biological diversity; public education, effective handling of biotechnology and its benefits, and more.⁶¹ The CBD is significant because it introduced the concept of biological diversity as “a common concern of humankind” and therefore a crucial development priority.⁶² The convention also transformed the way conservation is addressed in the international community in many notable ways, including through the linking of traditional conservation efforts to the economic priority of the sustainable use of biological resources. A number of biological subtopics were brought to the forefront of the international community’s awareness, such as the need to share the benefits of genetic resources developed for commercial use. Combined with the legally binding nature of this multilateral treaty, the CBD is a transformative piece of international legislation that represented a leap forward in the sphere of biological conservation.

The *Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity* was adopted in January 2000 and entered into force in 2003.⁶³ Also known as the *Biosafety Protocol*, the *Cartagena Protocol* focused on the movement of living modified organisms between countries.⁶⁴ The themes of genetic resources management and exchange of benefits resulting from biological resources while limiting costs were expanded upon and regulated through the *Cartagena Protocol*.⁶⁵ The protocol allows countries to limit the entrance of living modified organisms

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention on Biological Diversity, *Convention on Biological Diversity*, May 22, 1992.

⁵⁸ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “List of Parties,” n.d.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Convention on Biological Diversity, *Convention on Biological Diversity*, May 22, 1992.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “About the Protocol,” 2012.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

through their borders to protect the biological diversity of their ecosystems.⁶⁶ An advance informed agreement is established in the protocol, which mandates that countries give adequate information to destination countries in situations where living modified organisms are to travel across party State lines. The *Cartagena Protocol* references the language used in the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* through its affirmation of the precautionary approach to development measures.⁶⁷ The precautionary approach states that in cases where there are “threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.”⁶⁸ Simply put, the precautionary approach prohibits countries from citing a lack of absolute certainty of impending environmental crises or damage as an excuse for inaction. Where action can reasonably be taken to prevent or mitigate irreversible damage to biological diversity, it must be taken. The *Cartagena Protocol* can be seen as an update to the CBD with regards to new threats to biological diversity; as our capacity for biotechnology grows, so too must our approach to the protection of biological diversity.

The *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity* was adopted in October 2010 and entered into force in October 2014.⁶⁹ The *Nagoya Protocol* focuses on one of the three main objectives of the CBD: the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.⁷⁰ The aim of the *Nagoya Protocol* is that by increasing the legislation on one area of the CBD that has seen slow progress, the overall goal of conservation of biological diversity will benefit. This was to happen by incentivizing progress through shared benefits resulting from exploitation of genetic resources and living modified organisms. The most significant outcomes of the *Nagoya Protocol* are the measures to improve the share of benefits resulting from genetic resources and living modified organisms: increase transparency, encourage effective dispute settlement, and provide for increased technical assistance.⁷¹

Of all three components of the CBD, including the CBD, *Cartagena Protocol*, and the *Nagoya Protocol*, the *Nagoya Protocol* is the most contentious. The *Nagoya Protocol* has the lowest number of States Parties to the agreement at 107, compared to 171 for the *Cartagena Protocol* and 196 for the *CBD*.⁷² Some States have expressed that increased legislation and bureaucracy will hinder the international community’s efforts to monitor and collect information on biological diversity and to respond to infectious disease crises, among other criticisms.⁷³

Current Situation:

The Conference of Parties (COP) to the CBD is the governing body of the CBD and advances implementation of the convention through its biennial meetings.⁷⁴ The scope of each meeting

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “About the Nagoya Protocol,” n.d.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “List of Parties,” n.d.

⁷³ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “About the Nagoya Protocol,” n.d.

⁷⁴ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “Conference of the Parties,” n.d.

varies widely depending on the needs of the COP at any given time. For example, the first meeting of the COP took place in 1994, just one year after the CBD entered into force, and it established a medium-term plan of action for 1995-1997.⁷⁵ The COP decides when additional protocols need to be created and how that will take place. Some of the regular actions taken by the COP at these meetings include reviewing the progress made on implementation of the CBD, addressing the national and regional strategies called for in the CBD, and considering how to address special needs of the international community in relation to the conservation of biological diversity, such as island biological diversity, mountain ecosystems, invasive alien species, and more.⁷⁶ The COP has created ad-hoc working groups, frameworks for action, thematic programmes, and many other significant entities and documents.⁷⁷

Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020

The tenth meeting of the COP met in the Aichi Prefecture, Japan in October 2010 and adopted the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020*.⁷⁸ This plan, which coincides with the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity that was declared by the General Assembly, provides an overarching framework for action that is not limited to biodiversity-specific conventions and agreements but addresses the whole of the international community. Included within the document are the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, which include the following strategic goals:

- Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society;
- Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use;
- Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity; enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and
- Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.⁷⁹

This strategic plan lays out the development initiatives clearly while encouraging States to regularly report on their successes and obstacles.

The fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties is expected to update the CBD's strategic plan yet again with a post-2020 framework for action in line with the *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* as well as the sustainability recommendations in other contemporary international agreements, such as the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.⁸⁰ The *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020* describes its vision for the long term future, even beyond the scope of its 2020 deadline, as it includes the lofty vision that “by 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.”

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “Thematic Programmes and Cross-Cutting Issues,” n.d.

⁷⁸ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “Conference of the Parties,” n.d.

⁷⁹ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, *Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Targets*, n.d.

⁸⁰ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “Conference of the Parties,” n.d.; Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, “Preparations for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework.,” 2018; United Nations General Assembly, *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, A/RES/70/1, 2015.

International Day for Biological Diversity

The annual International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) is May 22.⁸¹ When the CBD first entered into force, the IDB was designated December 29 to align with the formal entrance of the CBD into force, but the General Assembly chose not to use the day that the CBD entered into force in order to not conflict with any other celebrations that may be taking place around that time.⁸² The date was changed to May 22 in 2000 to commemorate the International Negotiating Committee's presentation of the draft text of the CBD to the Nairobi Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁸³ Every year the IDB has a different theme, most recently "Celebrating 25 years of Action for Biodiversity" in 2018, and "Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism" in 2017.⁸⁴

Future Outlook:

While there has been significant development regarding the status and regulation of biodiversity, living modified organisms, and genetic resources, there are major challenges facing the future of biological diversity. As the global population grows to unprecedented levels, there is an increasing demand for biological resources that threatens to change the way biological resources are managed that goes against the tenants of conservation of biological diversity.⁸⁵ While widespread and effective, neither the CBD nor its protocols are universally signed and ratified. The General Assembly Second Committee is likely to continue to discuss not only how to best implement the CBD, but also how to protect biodiversity in general, especially its impact on development, food security, and economic growth.

Focus Questions:

- Is your country party to the CBD and its protocols?
- How does your country feel about regulation of the movement of living modified organisms across State lines?
- What has your country done to conserve biological diversity?
- How does biological diversity affect agriculture and food security?
- How can the benefits of biological diversity be equitably shared globally?
- What UN bodies and programs can assist Member States in the preservation of biological diversity and the sharing of its benefits?

⁸¹ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, "International Day for Biological Diversity 2018," n.d.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, "History of the Convention," n.d.

⁸⁴ Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, "International Day for Biological Diversity 2018," n.d.

⁸⁵ United Nations General Assembly, *Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development*, A/RES/72/221, 2017.

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