



Committee: ECOSOC

Topics: The recuperation from the aftermath of the *COVID-19 pandemic through bolstering resilience and multilateralism.*

Chairs: Anna Ma and Thomas Wu

Shenzhen College of International Education
3rd – 5th November 2023

Letter from the Chairs

Welcome to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the 2023 SCIE Model United Nations conference. The world is grappling with the aftermath of an unprecedented challenge: the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has both posed severe threats to global health and exposed societal vulnerabilities, economies, and international governance. As we convene to address the theme of "The Recuperation from the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic Through Bolstering Resilience and Multilateralism," we must acknowledge the urgency and complexity of the task.

This background guide will provide you with essential information to better understand the historical context, current situation, bloc positions, and possible solutions. It is our collective responsibility to engage in constructive dialogue to develop innovative strategies and strengthen international cooperation to mitigate the pandemic's impact and build a more resilient and inclusive world.

Take time to prepare yourself as an acknowledged diplomatic delegate. See you in November in our council!

Warmest Regard,

Chairs of Economic and Social Council
Feiyan (Anna) Ma, (Thomas) Junzhe Wu

Committee Background and Mission Statement

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is a principal organ of the United Nations (UN), founded in 1945 in response to the challenges at the end of the Second World War. Its aim was to enhance global cooperation in economic and social development, prevent future conflicts, and uplift global welfare.

Today, ECOSOC stands is central to address global issues like poverty, sustainable development, gender equality, and public health. It connects member states, UN specialized agencies, civic organizations, and the private sector in collaborative dialogue and policy development. Thus, bridging the economic and social dimensions of the UN's endeavors with a singular mission: improve global well-being.

The UN Charter, specifically Article 62, details ECOSOC's responsibilities, granting it authority to conduct studies, generate reports on a broad spectrum of international matters, and recommend actions to the General Assembly and other UN entities.

In summary, ECOSOC's fundamental objectives are to champion international economic and social development, serving as a nexus for debate, innovation, and coordination toward shared global goals. Operationally, it delves into issues like sustainable development and human rights and supervises functions of numerous UN-specialized entities.

Topic Overview

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most significant global challenges of the 21st century. Its aftermath demands a renewed focus on resilience and multilateralism to address its multifaceted impacts prepare for future global challenges.

History and Current Situation

Before COVID-19, the international community made steady strides toward objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite progress, challenges like widening inequality, environmental degradation, and stubborn rates of poverty remained. This trajectory was disrupted when the virus, first identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, led the WHO to declare it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by January 2020 and later a global pandemic in March 2020.

In response, nations across the globe enforced varying levels of lockdowns, travel bans, and other health-related measures. These restrictions, while crucial for public health, damaged the world economy with significant GDP contractions, unprecedented job losses, supply chain disruptions, and plummeting stock markets. Such repercussions extended beyond the global economy; societies experienced increasing inequalities, education systems became overwhelmed, mental health issues surged particularly among the young, and there was a distressing rise in domestic violence to name but a few.

Date	Events
December 2019	Outbreak in Wuhan, China
March 2020	WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic.
June 2020	UN Resolution 74/270 passed
August 2021	Vaccination campaigns kick off
2022 and beyond	Emphasis on economic recovery, addressing long-term social implications, and the establishment of frameworks for future pandemic responses.

In a remarkable display of global scientific collaboration, numerous vaccines were developed and rolled out in record time to combat the spread of COVID-19. However, uneven distribution illuminated broader systemic challenges. Vaccine inequity is glaringly evident as wealthy nations secured and administered the majority of available doses, leaving many economically developing countries struggling to vaccinate their most vulnerable populations. Furthermore, vaccine hesitancy—driven by misinformation, distrust in government institutions, and conspiracy theory—poses another barrier to achieving global immunity. This was further complicated by the ongoing emergence of new virus variants, some of which exhibit resistance to current vaccines, necessitating ongoing vaccine research.

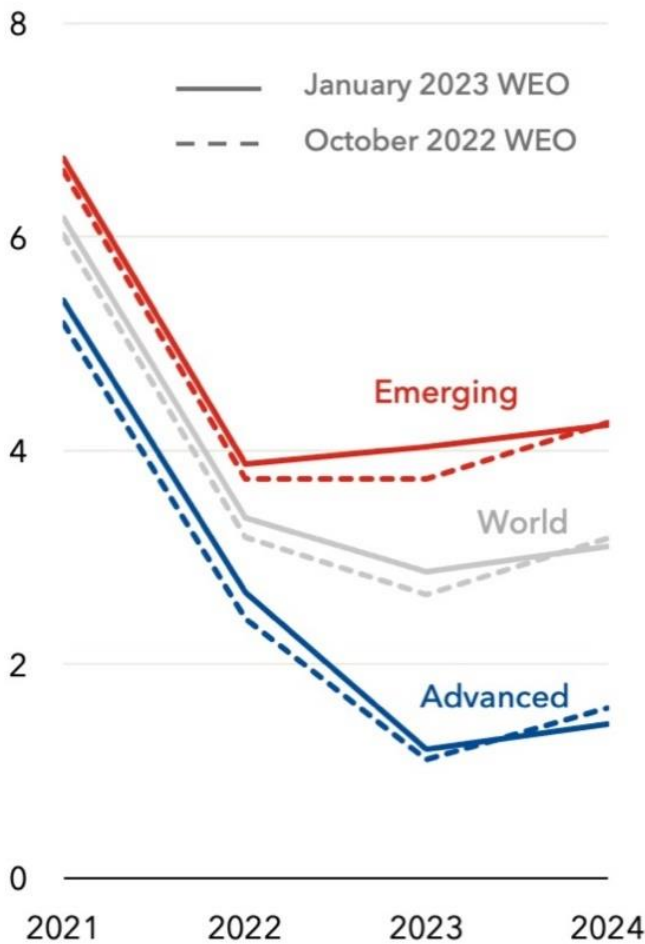
The global economy is gradually recovering from the recession triggered by COVID-19, demonstrating its resilience and determination. However, this recovery is not universal, exposing disparities in economic resilience and highlighting the importance of multilateral cooperation. While some economically developed nations have recovered relatively swiftly many faces structural vulnerabilities and continue to experience profound economic setbacks. Such challenges are often ignored because of limited capacity to access global financial assistance and resources, reiterating the need for a concerted global effort.

Global growth

China and India will be the major engines of growth this year.

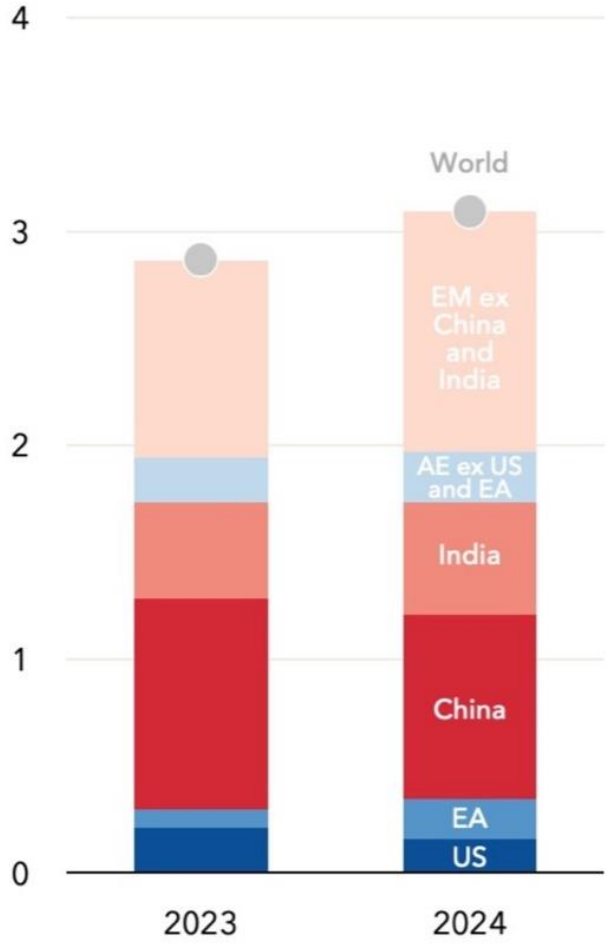
Growth projections

(percent; year over year)



Contribution to world GDP growth

(percent share of world growth)



Sources: IMF, WEO January 2023 Update; and IMF staff calculations.

Note: AE = Advanced economies. EM = Emerging economies. EA = Euro area.



Concurrently, COVID-19's damage to globalized supply chains meant many countries temporarily closed their borders during outbreaks to protect their citizens and ensure basic supplies. This led to raw material shortages, production disruptions, and a refocus to diversifying and strengthening supply chains. Although many borders have since reopened, the pace of recovery remains uneven, exacerbating economic strains in economically developing countries, highlighting the need for global coordination.

Moreover, amid the pandemic, numerous countries were compelled to re-evaluate and adjust monetary and fiscal policies. The pandemic underscored the importance of social safety nets, particularly healthcare, prompting governments worldwide to allocate substantial resources to bolster these and

stimulate economic resurgence. However, these are expensive, and international financial institutions and multilateral cooperation are essential for countries to manage their fiscal pressures towards recovery.

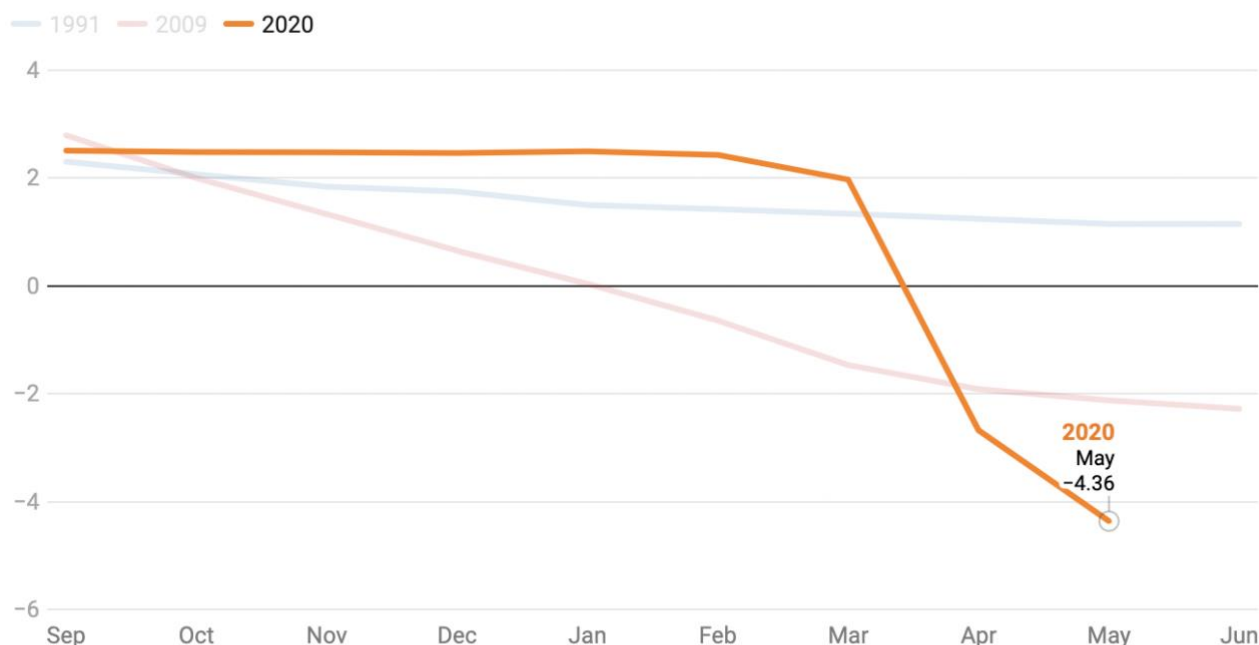
Overall, such extensive economic outlays might balloon national debt for many countries, potentially compromising their stability. This scenario is particularly detrimental for developing countries already burdened with substantial external debts, necessitating international debt relief initiatives, and coordinated efforts to ensure the sustainability of their economies.

Thus, the international community must recognize that, following the pandemic, ensuring a robust global economic recovery will be challenging but a shared responsibility. Strengthening economic resilience and promoting multilateralism are essential to foster an equitable and sustainable recovery leaving no nation behind.

The COVID-19 recession has seen the fastest, steepest downgrades in consensus growth projections among all global recessions since 1990



Consensus forecasts of global GDP (percent)



September to December shows forecasts made in the previous year, while January to June shows data for the current year. Data for 1991 are for advanced economies only due to data availability.

Source: Consensus Economics, World Bank

The pandemic's rapid and expansive impact meant environmental concerns, once a global priority, was relegated to the sidelines. Activities paramount to environmental sustainability like global climate

conferences, renewable energy campaigns, and conservation projects, were interrupted. Many were either postponed or faced diminished emphasis, as nations redirected their resources and focus on pandemic relief.

Such deviations, even if temporary adaptations, are not without consequence and can impede momentum built over decades of climate advocacy, risking global emission targets. It could slow down the transition from fossil fuels increase our carbon footprint. Climate change is a cumulative issue; thus, even short-term lapses can be devastating. In the recovery, it is imperative to resume environmental initiatives and redouble efforts, so that temporary setbacks are not irreversible.

The crisis highlighted the world's interdependence, showing both its strengths and vulnerabilities. We witnessed examples of unity: nations pooling resources, exchanging vital medical information, and sending aid to others in distress. Such actions underscored the essence of global community, suggesting that faced with shared challenges, countries can transcend their differences for the common good.

Yet, the pandemic revealed limitations of such cooperation. There were striking instances where countries, driven by national interests, resorted to protectionist measures. From hoarding medical supplies, implementing export bans, establishing unilateral travel restrictions, to competitive vaccine procurement strategies, these exposed fractures in the international community. Instead of a coordinated response, many nations adopted a 'me-first' approach, compounding existing anxieties about the well-being of their own populations and economic stability.

Such behaviors present profound implications. We face the question: how can the international community ensure more consistent and robust cooperation in future crises, balancing national interests with the imperatives of a shared destiny?

Bloc Positions

In the context of the Model United Nations, understanding group positions is essential for a productive dialogue within the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Different ECOSOC member states, such as China, the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, and intergovernmental organizations like the African Union, and UNESCO, bring unique perspectives and positions. To effectively navigate this, delegates must have an intimate knowledge of their country's position, recognize potential allies and adversaries, and strategize for negotiations and resolutions.

China

China was the first major nation to successfully contain the virus and initiate an economic recovery. Despite significant challenges, its manufacturing sector swiftly rebounded, while exports also recovered rapidly. This contributed significantly to the global economic recovery, stabilize global supply chains and international trade flows.

China has been actively involved in global public health cooperation. As part of its commitment to equitable vaccination distribution, it provided major vaccine aid to other countries, particularly the poorest persistently urging international collaboration and mutual aid, emphasizing the significance of a unity.

There are ongoing debate within the government regarding multilateralism, including questions about its scope as a global actor including on financial contributions to international organizations, a source of contention in the United States. Balancing China's national interests with its global responsibilities, multilateralism principles are a continuous concern.

Germany

In response to the pandemic's economic ramifications, Germany swiftly introduced a series of fiscal stimulus packages. Primarily aimed at bolstering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as industries particularly hard-hit. The employment landscape remained relatively stable, and its fundamental economic indicators showed a commendable level of resilience.

In parallel, it remains a staunch proponent of multilateralism, consistently advocating for global collaboration to address challenges. Particularly within the European Union, Germany plays a pivotal role fostering unity among member states.

However, within the German government, there remain occasional internal division regarding the implementation of multilateralism, especially in the context of international cooperation during the pandemic. Some disagreements revolved around the level of financial contributions it should make to international organizations and initiatives like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the COVAX vaccine distribution program.

Japan

Japan's technology industry has shown resilience and adaptability, with major technological and export sectors performing well. Japan has also demonstrated its commitment to international solidarity. It has been in the forefront of vaccine diplomacy, providing critical assistance to many economically underdeveloped countries. Furthermore, its work and support for international organizations, most notably the World Health Organization, shows its commitment to promoting global health.

African Union

Following COVID-19, the African Union (AU) showed its tenacity and adaptability amid a variety of multidimensional problems. It faced the contentious issue of vaccine distribution, where several of its member countries felt sidelined in global allocation. Despite this, the AU aggressively took steps to procure vaccines. Economic recovery produced a schism between governments favoring neoliberal policies and external cooperation and those highlighting the importance of pan-African collaboration, particularly under the AfCFTA banner. The recurring tension between national sovereignty and collective action has returned, with some states wary of external influences while others support a regional solution. Furthermore, given their diverse continental interests, negotiating relationships with important global players like as China, the United States, the European Union, and Russia require delicate diplomacy.

Canada

The Canadian government faced internal discussions and debates surrounding the implementation of multilateralism following the pandemic. While traditionally a proponent of multilateral cooperation, the pandemic brought forward issues related to vaccine distribution, its role within the global economic recovery, and the role of international institutions. Some within the government favored a robust global approach, others advocated for domestic prioritization.

Internationally it actively collaborates with various countries and global organizations. It made a large contribution to the COVAX effort, aiming to guarantee universal access to vaccines. It strengthens relations with longtime allies like the US and EU, participating in intergovernmental organizations like the G7 and the World Health Organization to coordinate future plans reaffirming its dedication to international solidarity and cooperation.

USA

The US took several measures to bolster economic multilateralism and resilience. These initiatives included re-engagement with international organizations like the WHO and the WTO. Furthermore, there was a renewed emphasis on supply chain diversification and domestic industry support to lessen over-dependence on any one foreign supplier, particularly for essential products.

While there was broad consensus within the US government on the need for stronger economic resilience, there were disagreements on how to achieve this. Some advocated for protectionist measures, with 'America First' policies to ensure domestic growth and jobs. Others believe in deeper multilateral engagements, arguing international collaboration yields better long-term results for the US economy.

They actively sought collaboration with other countries and international organizations post-COVID. Rejoining the Paris Agreement signaled the commitment to addressing global challenges collaboratively. Furthermore, the US initiated dialogues with allies and partners, like the European Union and countries in the Indo-Pacific.

UNESCO

The main objective of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, is to advance peace through global collaboration in education, science, and culture. UNESCO did not directly deal with economic multilateralism how financial institutions would, though it did emphasize the importance of international cooperation in its domains. including promoting distance and online learning, protecting cultural heritage affected by the pandemic, re-emphasizing the centrality of science and information to combat disinformation, and promoting global coordination.

To achieve this, UNESCO collaborates with member nations and intergovernmental organizations. Following COVID, UNESCO collaborated with several organizations to guarantee educational continuity, safeguard world heritage sites, and foster scientific cooperation. To assure educational continuity throughout the pandemic, for example, the Global Education Partnership was established by UNESCO and brought together international organizations, business interests, and NGOs. The key to its success was collaboration.

Possible Solutions

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is at a critical juncture, tasked with forging a path for global recovery amid unprecedented challenges. At this conference, we are not only about dialogue, but practical action and collaborative solutions. Several key strategies have played an important role in responding to the recovery process: strengthening multilateral frameworks, strengthening supply chains, initiating debt relief and financial assistance, and deepening cooperation among international organizations. Let us dive into these solutions to chart a sustainable path for our global community.

Strengthening Supply Chains

To strengthen global supply chains in the post-COVID era, diversifying supply sources is essential. By creating supply chain links between nations and regions, we can reduce overdependence on overstretched suppliers, spreading risk, and maintain a constant flow of goods. Indeed, boosting supply chain resilience is a key function of digital transformation. The use of digital tools and information technology for real-time monitoring, the use of IoT sensors, and harnessing big data and AI for demand forecasting and optimizing inventory can turbo boost the global economy.

To this end, we need strong partnerships and close coordination of supply chains means quick adaptation for companies, distributors, and stakeholders. We need to maintain a certain amount of essential reserve stock, including essential raw materials and first aid supplies. Designing such a sustainable supply chain will minimize environmental damage and uphold social responsibility requirements. Governmental assistance is crucial here. For example, fiscal incentives, local production incentives, and R&D investment can help kickstart this and with regular risk assessments and planning, remain sustainable.

Strengthening Multilateral Frameworks

Strengthening multilateral frameworks means economic multilateralism and resilience is crucial. This can be accomplished through renewing global collaboration with institutions like the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, honoring international treaties, coordinating national policies, and exchanging knowledge to tackle global challenges successfully. To facilitate coordination and address global concerns like climate change and public health, we need regular high-level international dialogue and summits among member-states.

Countries struggling economically may benefit from financial aid, debt relief, and technical support from international financial organizations like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Global economic activities promote meritocracy and sustainability by setting common international norms and

standards across a range of areas such trade, the environment, and worker rights. Additionally, it promotes technological innovation, key for renewable energy and the digital economy. To forge consensus among the international community and support the implementation of multilateral frameworks, we need to strengthen a global education program to raise awareness of multilateralism and global collaboration.

Resilience Funds

To implement Resilience Funds post-COVID, the first step is fundraising through international cooperation, government allocations, private donations, and support from international financial institutions. It is vital sufficient capital is available to deal with various economic crises with strategic planning outlining how such funds will be used to respond to various crises. The plan must be flexible to allow for unforeseen circumstances yet underpinned by transparency amid a rise in global corruption levels.

Debt Relief and Financial Aid

The implementation of Debt Relief and Financial Aid begins with a comprehensive reappraisal of each country's debt situation, encompassing debt levels, debt servicing capacity, and debt structure. This is essential to identify which countries are in most need of debt relief and financial aid. Such an approach should be multilateral and gain broad international support. International financial institutions, economically developed nations, particularly debtor countries should collectively participate and ensure sufficient resources and effective distribution.

The strategy's most important components are accountability and transparency. We must ensure its operation are open and transparent, with a clear accountability of money used to reduce debt burdens and promote economic recovery. To oversee this, we require robust accountability procedures. When providing financial aid, consideration must factor social and environmental sustainability. The long-term well-being of debtor countries is improved by backing initiatives and regulations advancing environmental, medical, and educational standards. To avoid regression to unsustainable debt loads, regular evaluations of debt sustainability should be made.

International Organization Cooperation

International Organization Cooperation will prioritize information sharing and policy coordination. They are essential for establishing unified policy and information exchange. We can then analyze global trends and concerns more effectively, assisting nations to develop successful policies. International organizations should concentrate on establishing global standards on areas such as worker rights,

environmental protection, and free trade. By ensuring that international commercial transactions are managed fairly and sustainably, such norms will produce robust and equitable global economic growth. Moreover, international organizations should emphasize technical assistance and knowledge sharing. They can aid economically developing nations in improving infrastructure, prosperity, and healthcare, helping to close development gaps. Another crucial component is the establishing international crisis management and emergency response systems. Emergency situations like pandemics or natural disasters, they should better coordinate resources and assistance. To ensure such compliance they should monitor and assess how specific policies and programs are being implemented globally.

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