

RESEARCH PAPER

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT

Dear Delegate,

Welcome to the research paper we have prepared for you.
This is a great starting point for your research.

If you have any questions about this research, please write
to us at *obsmun@obs.edu.pt*

Happy debating and see you soon.

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This research guide was compiled by the Secretariat of the OBSMUN 2025. OBSMUN aims to provide delegates with the opportunity to further develop their research skills that will help them in their academics. Thus, these research guides do not cover the whole breadth of the issues at hand. Instead, they are designed to provide a basis from which delegates can undertake their own research into the topics, with the aim of developing clauses from their independent research.

This guide is not sufficient as background information to prepare yourself for the country, since it does not look at the information from your countries point of view, but instead a generalised one.

WHEN RESEARCHING FOR INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR COUNTRY YOU MAY WANT TO ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS;

- **Where does your country stand on the issue being addressed?**
- **Does it affect the country you are representing?**
- **Would your country be in favour / against taking action on the issue?**
- **What policies are currently in place in your country to address this issue?**
- **Given your country's stance & policies, what type of solution would you support?**
- **What measures would benefit your country?**
- **What measures would be detrimental to your country? Which ones would your country be especially be opposed to?**

TOPIC 1: THE ISSUE OF TACKLING THE NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENT IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

Introduction to The Topic:

In recent years, we have begun to see a global shift toward the usage of renewable energy. This is a consequence of the magnitude of concerns connected to climate change. The UN established the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to spread awareness and encourage nations to combat pressing issues together, including climate change, particularly through SDG 7 and SDG 13.



(Martin, 2025)

- An important effort made globally to tackle the issue of climate change is the Paris agreement, a “legally

binding international treaty on climate change” that was “adopted by 195 Parties at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris, France, on 12 December 2015” and “aims to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels” (Unfccc.int, 2025).

The SDGs displayed and the existence of agreements such as the Paris agreement place pressure on all countries to shift towards renewable energy at an accelerated pace. Although this shift is rooted in good intentions, the large-scale investment in this sector could lead to unintended economic consequences, especially in countries which depend on the investment in fossil fuels or have underdeveloped energy infrastructure.

Delegates of ECOSOC should focus on how to make this transition as just, equitable, and economically sustainable as possible for all nations. Some of the consequences that should be considered include: job displacement, rising public debt and widening inequality.

Historical Background:

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the 'Earth Summit', was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. The conference brought together political leaders, diplomats, scientists, representatives of the media and non-

governmental organisations (NGOs) from 179 countries for a massive effort to focus on the impact of human socio-economic activities on the environment. “The primary objective of the Rio 'Earth Summit' was to produce a broad agenda and a new blueprint for international action on environmental and development issues that would help guide international cooperation and development policy in the twenty-first century” (Nations, 2015).

Achievements:

- [The Rio Declaration](#) and its 27 universal principles
- [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#)
- [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), and the [Declaration on the principles of forest management](#)
- Creation of the [Commission on Sustainable Development](#)
- Holding of the first World Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in 1994
- Negotiations for the establishment of the [agreement on straddling stocks and highly migratory fish stocks](#).

Early efforts, such as the Kyoto Protocol (Unfccc.int, 2020), to address environmentally sustainable development focused heavily on the reduction of emissions without fully addressing the economic dislocations that result from a rapid pivot away from the use and investment in fossil fuels.

For a more comprehensive understanding of action taken, look into Carbon Credits and Carbon offsets:

- <https://carboncredits.com/the-ultimate-guide-to-understanding-carbon-credits/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/nov/10/cop29-what-are-carbon-credits-and-why-are-they-so-controversial>

Past UN Action and International Action:

The UN has already begun to address the issue at hand through various initiatives. The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) is a “prominent alliance of five UN agencies, funding partners, and 22 partner countries that work together to transform economies into drivers of sustainability” (Un-page.org, 2024). The UNDP’s climate promise initiative is based on supporting countries and allowing them to reach their climate goals. They “work with more than 140 countries and territories to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the challenges of climate change”. Their efforts are organised under five pillars: “adaptation, mitigation, carbon markets, forests and policy”. They deliver “a portfolio of over US\$2 billion in grant financing. Importantly, this portfolio leverages strong links with UNDP’s expertise on gender equality, energy, nature, poverty, health, finance and climate security, among others” (UNDP Climate Promise, 2025). Furthermore, the International Labour Organization created a set of guidelines that are “both a policy framework and a practical tool to help countries at all levels of development manage the transition to low-carbon economies and can also help them achieve their Intended Nationally Determined

Contributions (INDC) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals” (International Labour Organization, 2016).

Current Situation and Challenges:

“The green paradox refers to an outcome in which climate policies such as carbon taxes, which are aimed at reducing carbon emissions, instead have the opposite effect: emissions increase, at least for some period of time” (An Introduction to the Green Paradox: The Unintended Consequences of Climate Policies | Review of Environmental Economics and Policy: Vol 9, No 2, 2015). This paradox arises as a result of companies and countries that extract and sell fossil fuels adapting their behaviour when they hear that stricter climate measures will be introduced in the future. If governments announce that carbon taxes will increase or that tougher restrictions will be put in place, resource owners may decide to speed up their extraction and sales before the policies make it less profitable. This could cause an extraction race, which would lead to an immediate increase in emissions.

There are generally two levels of this paradox. A weak Green Paradox happens when emissions increase temporarily. A strong Green Paradox occurs when these early increases in extraction lead to higher overall emissions in the long run, making climate change worse than it otherwise would have been. Whether this happens depends on a number of factors, such as how easy it is for producers to switch from one fuel to another, whether renewable energy is available as a cheaper alternative, and how different regions of the world react to each other's climate policies. For example, if one country restricts fossil fuel use but others do not, fuel

producers might simply sell more to countries with weaker rules, cancelling out the benefits of stricter action.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1093/reep/rev010>

Less developed countries easily fall under some of the categories established by the factors above. Many countries' economies are in a volatile state. Shifting away from fossil fuels could negatively impact their revenue, money which they may use to fund public services. Some countries may not have access to the specialised training required to offer replacement jobs for those who are employed by fossil fuel companies. All of these points, among others, must be considered when addressing the issue of tackling the negative economic impacts of large-scale investment in renewable energy.

TOPIC 2: THE ISSUE OF ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL HOUSING CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON FUTURE GENERATIONS

Introduction To The Topic:

The UN's urban development agency has estimated that "2.8 billion people worldwide lack access to adequate housing, secure land, and basic water and sanitation services". This equates to around "40 per cent of the global population" and includes "more than 1.12 billion people

living in slums or informal settlements”. Furthermore, an additional “300 million face absolute homelessness” (UN News, 2025). The “lack of affordable housing to buy or rent is fuelling a global housing crisis”. Some of the factors fuelling the housing crisis include “shortages of land, lending, labour and materials” (Masterson, 2022).

This issue infringes, mainly, upon the following SDGs:



(Martin, 2025)

Delegates of ECOSOC should focus on employing strategies that mitigate the effects and address the scale of the global housing crisis. The long-term impacts of this issue must be considered, such as rising inequality, decreasing natality rates, homelessness, job displacement, etc.

Historical Background:

In a study of 200 cities globally, “90% were found to be unaffordable to live in, with the average home costing more than three times the average income” (Masterson, 2022). House prices globally have risen at their fastest rate for 40 years, according to research from financial services firm JP Morgan. Rent prices are also soaring. The crisis is “particularly acute in rapidly urbanising regions such as Africa and the Asia-Pacific. As cities grow, housing

development and infrastructure fail to keep pace, leading to a dramatic increase in informal and inadequate living conditions” (UN News, 2025). Rising housing costs mean “people have less money to spend on other essentials, like groceries, bills, transport and looking after their families” (Masterson, 2022). Unaffordable housing also fuels homelessness. When housing costs climb, it also pushes up inflation and depresses economic growth. Lack of affordable housing forces workers to live farther away from their jobs, ‘requiring long and costly commutes and reducing productivity,’ Moody’s Analytics says in its study.

In Africa, “62 per cent of urban dwellings are informal. In the Asia-Pacific region, over 500 million people lack access to basic water services, and more than a billion live without adequate sanitation” (UN News, 2025). As climate change intensifies, those without formal, quality housing and services face growing risks from extreme heat, severe weather events, and water scarcity.

Finding sustainable solutions to the housing crisis is central to advancing global sustainable development. “Quality housing is not only a basic human right – it also drives job creation, boosts national income, saves lives, and lays the foundation for better health, education, and economic mobility” (UN News, 2025).

Past UN and International Action:

Initiatives (Masterson, 2022):

- Japan has been very successful in supplying affordable housing. Simple planning laws that encourage development in response to need and favourable property taxes are part of its approach.

- In the US, the government is pledging to close America's housing supply shortage in five years. Its plans include incentives to relax state and local land use laws and regulations that limit housing density. Other plans include introducing new ways to finance housebuilding.
- In Scotland, the Scottish Government plans to increase the supply of homes by 2040 through policies including a range of funding mechanisms to build affordable homes.
- In India, a new building system that uses low-cost, prefabricated panels made from waste material has been approved by the government and is expected to cut the cost of building homes.
- Other initiatives include the development of 3D-printed homes in Africa, Mexico, India, Europe and other regions. 3D printing can produce high-quality homes much more quickly and cheaply than traditional construction.

A key focus of the UN-Habitat Assembly is the adoption of UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for 2026–2029. The plan will prioritise adequate housing, access to land and basic services and the transformation of informal settlements. It outlines three main impact areas: “(1) inclusive prosperity, (2) preparedness, recovery, and reconstruction and (3) climate sustainability” (UN News, 2025). These pillars are designed to accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

Current situation and challenges:

The world needs to build “96,000 new affordable homes every day to house the estimated 3 billion people who will

need access to adequate housing by 2030, UN-Habitat says” (Masterson, 2022).

This crisis cannot be attributed simply to a lack of housing. What we face “may not be a global housing shortage but in fact, a global housing mismatch” (Nielsen, 2025). The pattern of housing underutilization is unfolding on a global scale. “Simply increasing supply doesn’t necessarily reduce prices, because we’re often still building in the wrong places” (Nielsen, 2025).

Globally, housing has become a significant political flashpoint, “ranking among the foremost issues that shape and influence elections” (Nielsen, 2025).

It must be noted that this issue is qualitative and quantitative. This crisis also exposes the depth of inequality worldwide, as some live in mansions valued at millions of dollars, while others cannot afford a place to live at all.

For a deeper understanding of this issue, research the impact of Airbnb on your and other nations:

- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0166046221000272>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/garybarker/2020/02/21/the-airbnb-effect-on-housing-and-rent/>

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