International Bodies

ECOSOC

CHAIR:

GWCIA 30

December 6th

Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the GWCIA Model United Nations Conference! My name is Samhita Madakshira, and I am a first-year student at The George Washington University, majoring in International Affairs and Economics. I am absolutely thrilled to serve as your chair for this committee and cannot wait to witness the skills and talents you will each bring to the table.

This year, our committee will discuss either how automation and artificial intelligence are transforming the global workforce or how technological growth is impacting the environment and sustainability efforts. Both topics ask us to consider how progress can be balanced with responsibility: towards workers, communities and our planet as a whole.

I know that stepping into committee as a delegate can feel daunting at first. You are asked to represent not just yourself, but the voice and interests of an *entire nation*, and that can seem like a lot of responsibility. But success is entirely possible, and is derived from your hard-work, passion and enthusiasm in committee. Remember that Model United Nations isn't solely about speaking well and writing resolutions– it's equally about enjoying the process and making long-lasting friendships along the way.

I look forward to seeing you shine in your own unique ways in committee, delegates! I wish you the best of luck!

Warm regards,
Samhita Madakshira

Introduction to Committee:

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) body of the UN deals with all things related to economic and social progress, through discussing and organizing solutions to issues like unemployment, inequality, and poor living standards. The different member states of this committee are committed to achieving sustainable development, meaning achieving progress in a way that leaves future generations better off, not worse. So, delegates should not just consider how their solutions to these problems impact the world of today, but also how they impact the environment, children, and communities of the future. (United Nations)

The committee will be a General Assembly (GA) style committee, where delegates will work together to draft and vote on a resolution towards the issues presented. There will be a roll call at the start of each committee session, then debate will continue with a variety of motions called by the delegates. During this time, delegates will split into different blocs, or groups, based on who the countries they represent would want to work with. While delegates should keep in mind the position of the country they're representing, they should also be open-minded to solutions presented by other countries and try to focus on what they have in common instead of their differences. After writing and debating on working papers, delegates will come together to draft several final resolutions to address the issues at hand. More information on the exact procedure can be found in the delegate handbook.

Topic 1: Managing The Impact of Automation on Workers

While the concept of automation, or using machinery to replace and improve upon the work of humans, has been gaining popularity with the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), the relationship between automation and employment has been around since the Industrial Revolution. With the invention of the steam engine and other technological improvements, factories around the world began to use machines to do jobs that used to be done by human workers. For example, the invention of the loom transformed how fabric was woven, both allowing new patterns as well as more efficient and cheaper rugs, clothes, and other textiles. Similarly, the invention of the windmill used wind energy to grind grain in farms, work that used to be done manually by either farmers or their animals. With each improvement in automation, work became easier and goods became cheaper. (Britannica) From there, the invention of the computer allowed for even more automation, as machines could now be programmed to work on their own instead of needing to be controlled by a human. This meant automation on a bigger scale, with factories now being able to automate the production of a huge variety of goods.

There are both winners and losers in the advance of technology in the economy. Automation and machinery make the production of goods and services easier for workers and businesses, leading to more goods being produced and becoming cheaper for consumers due to economies of scale. Generally, consumers and businesses are the "winners" of automation, as consumers get cheaper products and businesses increase profits. Workers are also able to be "winners" due to automation, as their jobs generally become easier with the ability to use machines to produce goods for them. On the other hand, other workers may become "losers" as automation replaces their labor. Automation particularly hurts low-skilled workers like clerks and manual laborers. However, automation generally leads to the creation of jobs to replace jobs lost, such as jobs to maintain and operate machinery, and the jobs created are caused by the increase in consumer spending power caused by lower prices of goods and services.[1]

Alongside traditional automation in the manufacturing sectors, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) has presented a credible threat to the service sectors in middle and high-skilled jobs. As AI rapidly advances, there is a growing concern among the services sector for their job security. AI and traditional automation have their similarities, but it is important to consider the differences they have, who they impact, and how they do so.

Questions to Consider

1. How can government policy mitigate the threat AI poses to jobs?

[1] https://www.brookings.edu/articles/understanding-the-impact-of-automation-on-workers-jobs-and-wages/

2. Is there a difference in how AI threatens jobs between the manufacturing and service industries?
3. How can companies utilize AI to maximize efficiency while ensuring that jobs are safeguarded?
4. Should AI be banned, or can it be regulated to ensure the safe use of these tools to benefit mankind?

Topic 2: Dealing With Environmental Effects of Technological Growth

The rise of human technology has always had an impact on the environment. From the earliest days of humanity's discovery of fire, technological advancements have enabled people to alter their environment for their own benefit. However, this ability to change the environment was limited to the immediate surroundings of human settlement up until the Industrial Revolution. With the rise of steam engines, fossil fuel usage, and industrial machinery, humans had the power to change the environment on a global level.

Industrial machinery has allowed for unprecedented levels of terraforming, from mass deforestation to massive mining operations to infrastructure megaprojects. Technology has created drastic changes in the environment. Industrial projects have disrupted ecosystems, from the destruction of forests for farmland to man-made shifts in river flows, creating ecological damage. Industrialization has allowed humans to have near-complete control of the natural environment, which has allowed some to damage the environment and ruin natural ecosystems.

Additionally, industrialization runs on the usage of fossil fuels. While attempts have been made to utilize green energy, the current energy demands of the world are met by the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas. Technological advances have increased human energy demands dramatically, leading to greater burning of fossil fuels that pollute the environment. Fossil fuel burning is the primary cause of global warming and climate change, and continued dependence on these sources of energy can lead to irreparable damage to Earth's ecosystem. In the modern day, artificial intelligence (AI) has risen to global prominence, leading to everyday people using AI in their daily lives. AI has massive energy and water demands, which exacerbate the current situation. AI water usage is projected to reach between 4.2 to 6.6 billion gallons of water per year by 2027.[2] This massive water usage for AI could restrict water availability for agriculture and human consumption, alongside damaging water access for the environment. Alongside the water demands for AI, predictions by the Lawrence National Laboratory estimated that by 2028, AI could utilize as much as 22% of all of the U.S. household energy consumption. [3] This energy demand would dramatically increase the energy needs of developed countries, which would likely be made up by the increased burning of fossil fuels.

Technological development has massively benefited the quality of life for humans around the world; however, this has historically come at the cost of the environment. As the climate crisis becomes increasingly dire, countries must consider effective policies to balance advances in technology to support humans and concerns for environmental conservation.

---

[2] https://cee.illinois.edu/news/AIs-Challenging-Waters
[3] https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/05/20/1116327/ai-energy-usage-climate-footprint-big-tech/

Questions to Consider?

1. Are the benefits of infrastructure projects and resource-gathering projects worth the environmental costs for the benefit of human welfare? Is there a way to balance these two?
2. How should nations tackle the increasing energy demands of AI to limit its effect on the environment?
3. How can technological development be used to benefit the environment?
4. How are environmental considerations different between developed and developing nations around the world?

Works Cited

O'Donnell, James. "We Did the Math on AI's Energy Footprint. Here's the Story You Haven't Heard." MIT Technology Review, September 22, 2025. https://www.technologyreview.com/2025/05/20/1116327/ai-energy-usage-climate-footprint-big-tech.

Pinheiro Privette, Ana. "Ai's Challenging Waters." Illinois, October 11, 2024. https://cee.illinois.edu/news/AIs-Challenging-Waters.

Zia Qureshi, Cheonsik Woo, Zia Qureshi, Vanessa van den Boogaard Max Gallien, Laura Martinez Caren Grown, and Adam Aley Anthony F. Pipa. "Understanding the Impact of Automation on Workers, Jobs, and Wages." Brookings, March 9, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/understanding-the-impact-of-automation-on-workers-jobs-and-wages/.