Houston Area Model United Nations
Standard Committee

ECOFIN



Chair | Tejaswi Sriram
Topic B: Distributing Resources & Economic Aid among Former States as a Consequence of Territoriality
Houston Area Model United Nations 52
February 4 & 5, 2027

Atilgan Ozdil/Anadolu Ag

Chair Letter

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to HAMUN 52! My name is Tejaswi Sriram and I am excited to be your chair for the United Nations Economic and Finance Committee (ECOFIN) this year!

I am currently a graduate student at the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), where I am pursuing a double Masters in Human Development - Early Childhood Disorders and Criminology. I started participating in Model UN when I was in middle school, meaning I've been a part of the MUN world for a decade now! From the strong sense of community to meeting new people and learning about real-world global issues, MUN has been such a meaningful and rewarding experience for me. I've had the opportunity to chair at HAMUN 49 in SOCHUM and HAMUN 51 in UNEP, both of which I truly enjoyed. Currently, I volunteer as part of the staff and dais for collegiate and high school conferences. It's always such a fun experience to come back, volunteer, and see so many people passionate about the world.

I wanted to chair ECOFIN because I am passionate about global economic policies, and believe in the importance of international cooperation when addressing economic challenges and their impacts at the global, regional, and local levels. I wanted to share a few last minute tips: Research is key! The more you know about your country, the committee, and the topics, the more confident and prepared you will feel. It's also completely okay to be nervous, regardless of if you're a first-time delegate or a seasoned veteran (trust me, I still get nervous too!). I encourage y'all to push yourself to step outside of your comfort zones, especially when it comes to public speaking, because growth happens when you truly challenge yourself. And above all, have fun and enjoy the experience!



I can't wait to see what y'all accomplish in committee. Feel free to reach out to me at any time with questions or concerns. Best of luck delegates!

Tejaswi Sriram
Chair of ECOFIN
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Vice-Chair Letter

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to HAMUN, and to the Economic and Financial Committee known as (ECOFIN). My name is Jose Portales, and I will be your Vice Chair for this year's ECOFIN committee, which is surprisingly known as the Second General Assembly!

I am currently in my sophomore year at Texas A&M University pursuing a Business degree in Finance at Mays Business School. Since 2024, I've been part of ECOSOC and a 2 time General Assembly Plenary delegate, with my chair career starting this year. Since my first participation at HAMUN, the conference has provided a sense of place, feeling that delegates and I have the power to change the world. This has led to maturity in the role delegates and chairs play and how it has opened our eyes to the world. Model UN has also taught to analyze circumstances from others' viewpoints.

I chose to staff ECOFIN because of the connection to my degree, but also because of what it takes to succeed, making a strategic place for delegates to show their skills. In this form, delegates can address, research, and even learn new content, giving them knowledge of current or past events. Another reason why I chose to staff relies on fairness and integrity I've always wanted to see in the world and in Model UN, avoiding any issue from one delegate towards another, which convinced me to be part of an event that has potential to transform the lives of those present. Regardless of everyone's starting position, I know that we all have space to grow in Model UN.

As quick tips to succeed, I can confidently say that statistics is crucial in any way possible, while making research with citations the best friend in a conference. It has happened and it may again. Secondly, creating an impact in any unique way. These tools can be highly important for Model UN and sometimes even for future endeavors. I wish all of you the best in this conference! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me!



Jose Portales
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Background Information

History

The Economic and Financial Committee (ECOFIN), the Second Committee of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA), was established in 1945. Since its founding, ECOFIN has been the main GA body responsible for addressing macroeconomic policies, financing for development, poverty eradication, and sustainable development. ECOFIN's work also includes addressing globalization, food security, and operational activities for development through on-the-ground programs in regions of need [1]. This committee regularly collaborates with other UN bodies such as the UN Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and international organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Over time, ECOFIN has been a part of various important global development frameworks, including the Millennium Declaration of 2000, which set the Millennium Development Goals and provided Member States a shared set of targets for reducing poverty [2]. This committee also took part in the to the Monterrey Consensus of 2002, the first major international agreement on how development should be financed at the local, national, and international levels [3]. In 2015, ECOFIN supported the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which expanded the international language on financial frameworks [4]. That same year, the GA adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which ECOFIN assists in reviewing the progress of each year [5]. In 2025, this committee acted as one of the primary hosts of the Seville Conference, a major international development finance summit that occurs once every 10 years, in order to overhaul the global financial structures and address the $4 trillion annual SDG financing gap impacting developing nations. This conference led to the Seville Commitment, which established over 130 actionable

Background Information

initiatives regarding tax reform, debt relief modernization, and multilateral lending expansions [6]. As one of the leading bodies in financial development within the UN, ECOFIN prioritizes collaborative efforts and recognizes the need to respond to ongoing financial crises and support the SDGs.

Mandate

ECOFIN's mandate allows for discussions, negotiations, and recommendations on economic and development issues, but all resolutions are non-binding, meaning that Member States may choose to implement them but are not required to. The committee also guides other UN bodies through its review of operational activities for development, such as setting priorities for committees like UNDP and UNICEF. ECOFIN itself cannot allocate funds, as the UN budget is funded by contributions and managed through the Fifth Committee, and most development programs rely on voluntary contributions from Member States, IGOs, and other parties [1].

Topic Information

Introduction

The second topic for this committee is "Distributing Resources and Economic Aid among Former States as a Consequence of Territoriality". Territoriality can be compared to a nation claiming ownership of previous territory. In international law, this topic is closely tied to the succession of States, which the UN defines as the replacement of one State by another in the responsibility for the international relations of a territory [7]. Former states are still crucial as they are nations that were once part of a larger country, and still hold shared cultures, histories, and communities. When a larger nation divides or ceases to exist, the UN refers to this nation as the "predecessor State" and the newly developed nations as the "successor States" [7]. In 1983, the UN convened a diplomatic conference on the property, archives, and debts of former states, which 90 nations attended, to discuss this growing occurrence [8].

Some acts of territoriality can be expressed as the ownership of resources, financial aid, and international importance. Under the 1983 Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of State Property, Archives, and Debts, an immovable State property of the predecessor State located in a concerned territory passes to the successor State [7]. Claims to resources are further influenced by the principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources, which the General Assembly affirmed in resolution 1803 [9]. This resolution confirmed that States and international bodies must respect the sovereignty of nations and their peoples regarding natural wealth and resources [9].

With the dissolution of former states and the emergence of newly divided nations, there are many ongoing challenges, such as the development that can occur within two or more states. The 1983 Convention gives States no clear or precise guidance on how to divide assets, resulting in state debts often being settled through lengthy bargaining [10]. International legal work is still evolving regarding states and resources, as only in 2017 did the International Law Commission add the topic of succession of

States in respect of State responsibility to its programme of work [11]. As ECOFIN's resolutions are non-binding recommendations rather than obligations, it is important to consider what methods can be taken to encourage fair, cooperative, and development-focused solutions between predecessor and successor States.

History

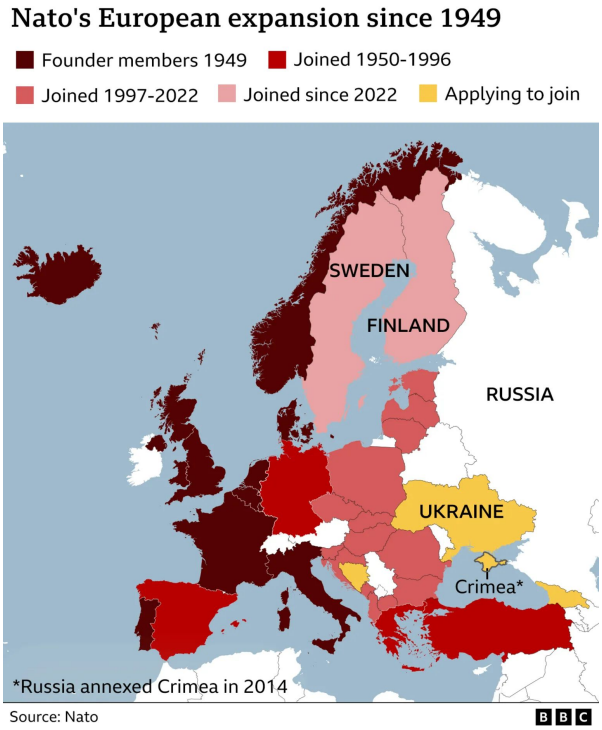
The history of this topic is rooted in the past, with many modern cases having started as a result of revolutions and independence movements. Since the creation of the United Nations in 1945, 80 former colonies have gained their independence [12], and the UN's Special Committee on Decolonization continues to monitor the implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [13]. With a significant number of these nations belonging to the African continent, which now accounts for more than 50 UN Member States [14], this history is especially foundational to this region. Many of these states emerged from territories that had been managed by European nations, and each newly independent state had to settle what property, archives, and debts it would inherit. This was the primary concern when the UN adopted the 1983 Vienna Convention, which was drafted as the world was transformed by decolonization [8].

The International Law Commission (ILC) first took up the subject of successions of States in 1949 [16]. When the first set of rules on succession in respect to treaties were drafted, the most recent State practices at that time emerged from former colonies, leading to various inconsistencies [15]. The resulting 1978 Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties took almost eighteen years to enter in force, finally being done in 1996. By the time it was adopted in 1978, the process of decolonization was nearly over [15]. The 1983 Convention covered the passing of State property, archives, and debts in cases such as newly independent States, the unification of States, the separation of parts of a State, and the dissolution of States, and is still yet to enter in force [8].

The early 1990s brought about a new set of challenges. Several states separated within the span of only a few years, from 1991 to 1993. Without a binding framework, successor States relied on independent negotiations for resources. In 2001, the former regions of Yugoslavia, now known as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia, signed the treaty on the Agreement on Succession Issues, which was adopted in 2004. This treaty covered aspects such as diplomatic and consular property, financial assets and liabilities, archives, and pensions [17]. In 2020, the General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and the ILC continues to focus on the topic of succession of States in respect to State responsibility [18].

Case Study 1: Russia & Ukraine after the Soviet Union

A modern-day example of territoriality involves the Russian Federation (also referred to as Russia) and Ukraine, two successor States of the Soviet Union, which dissolved in the early 1990's. In 1991, during this process, Russia succeeded to the USSR's previous UN statuses, while the other former Soviet nations acceded to the UN, though Ukraine and Belarus had been members since 1945 [19]. Russia also assumed the obligations of the former Soviet debt in exchange for rights to the Soviet financial assets, known as a "zero option", and between 1992 and 1993, Russia signed similar agreements with 12 of the 15 former Soviet nations [20].

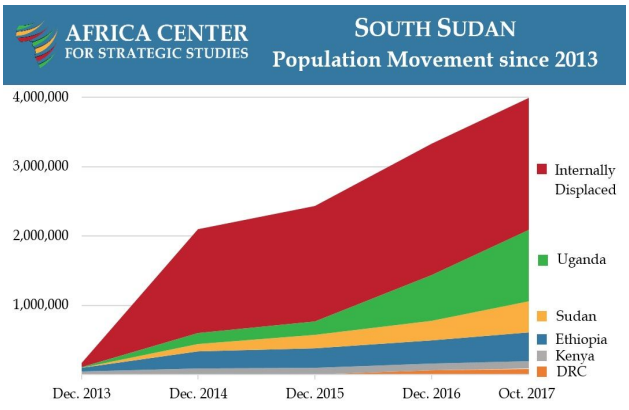


Decades later, territory grew to become a significant issue. In 2022, the GA adopted resolution ES-11/1, which found the aggression by Russia against Ukraine as a violation of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and demanded an immediate ceasefire [21]. A few months later, GA resolution ES-11/4 declared that the Russian actions on regions of Ukraine violated Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, a concept that is tied to the foundation of the UN itself [22]. Beyond territory itself, culture, influence, and political connections can often remain between a predecessor and successor State, which also may be of significance during conflicts like this one.

This case brings relevance to ECOFIN because the debts and assets of a dissolved State shape the economic position of its successors for decades. The GA recently reaffirmed, in resolution 80/123 on external debt sustainability and development, that debt sustainability significantly impacts growth [23]. This resolution also reaffirmed the Sevilla Commitment, and while ECOFIN itself cannot allocate funds itself, this committee plays a crucial role in how States can approach debt and development together.

Case Study 2: South Sudan's Independence from Sudan

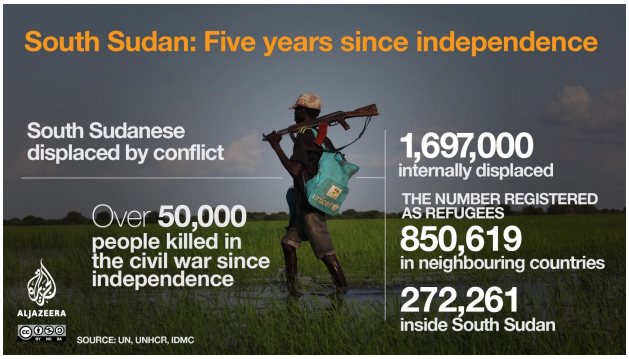
South Sudan offers a perspective different from Europe and the West. Its separation from Sudan, the predecessor State, followed the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement and referendum held in January 2011 [24]. The division of resources was one of the first challenges. The peace agreement set a 50:50 split of oil revenue before independence, but did not set up a post-independence mechanism for oil sharing or transit fees [25]. South Sudan gained control of most of the oil production, but as a landlocked nation, ended up being highly dependent on Sudan's pipelines [25]. Sudan asked for transit fees of $32 to $36 per barrel, while South Sudan itself offered less than $1 [25]. In January 2012, South Sudan shut down all of its oil production and restarted nearly 15 months later in April 2013, after lengthy negotiations [25].



Data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

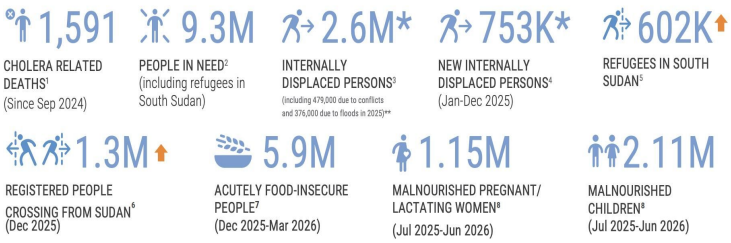
Oil was around 98 percent of South Sudan's government revenue and about 57 percent of Sudan's in 2011 [25]. In 2012, oil's share of Sudan's government revenue fell to 27 percent, down from nearly the 60 percent recorded two years earlier [26].

After conflict broke out in December 2013, more than 2.25 million people were displaced by July 2015, including about 1.5 million internally displaced and 730,000 refugees [27]. By the end of 2017, there were 2.43 million South Sudanese refugees and 1.9 million internally displaced individuals [28]. In April 2023, further conflict broke out in Sudan, leading to South Sudan receiving approximately 1.3 million new arrivals, further complicating resource distribution and financial capacities [29].



The World Bank reported in March 2025 that poverty had risen to 92 percent of the population, and there are significant impacts on health, social structures, and more [30].

This case is relevant to ECOFIN as it shows how a revenue source shared before independence, shared cultures and communities, and conflicts can leave both States economically exposed and dependent on limited external aid.



Case Study 3: Dissolution of Yugoslavia

The dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s is one of the most documented cases of successor States dividing the assets and debts of a predecessor State. Reaching an agreement took years, partly because of the disagreement over who the successors were. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) maintained that it was a continuation of the predecessor state rather than a successor of it [31]. The Security Council, however, considered that it could not automatically continue the predecessor's UN membership [32]. Other complications regarding the dissolution of Yugoslavia included the fact that the property in the predecessor state was held in "social ownership" rather than State ownership, and that the date of succession differed for each nation [31].

In December 1992, the IMF determined that the predecessor State had ceased to be a member and named five successor States, known as Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Montenegro and Serbia), each of which had to agree to its share of the predecessor's assets and liabilities [33]. Yugoslavia's share was set at 36.52 percent during this agreement, but the wider settlement took much longer [33]. In 2001, these five successor States concluded the Agreement on Succession Issues, which was ratified and adopted in 2004 [34]. This agreement covers various areas, including movable and immovable property, diplomatic and consular property, financial assets and liabilities, archives, and pensions [35]. Czechoslovakia agreed on a split that was in a 2:1 proportion to their populations, similar to Yugoslavia's agreements [31].

This case is extremely relevant within ECOFIN as it became a precedent for how long successor States can remain unsettled on debt and assets when no clear frameworks may exist. In 2014, the Second Committee approved a draft resolution to establish an ad hoc committee on multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring, using the case of the former state Yugoslavia [36]. The GA has since reaffirmed, in GA resolution 80/123, the importance of debt sustainability as well, and significant progress has been made [23].

Questions to Consider

1. Which Member States, regions, or other parties should contribute to distributing resources and economic aid among former states, and how should those contributions be decided if not all States contribute equally?

2. How reliable is the use of outside organizations, such as intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, or non-governmental organizations, to provide aid, and what role do they play?

3. What criteria should be used to determine the amount of aid a state receives, its level of need, and the urgency of that need, while also considering other factors such as debt, existing resources, and development?

4. How should timeframes be set for distributing assets, debts, and aid among states that are recent successors, states that have experienced recent conflict, and states that are facing long-term economic hardship?

5. How can the committee address the legal and political questions that follow a dissolution, such as who qualifies as a success State, and how should those questions affect the distribution of assets and debts?

6. How do development levels and economic needs differ across regions of the world, and how should aid be adapted to account for these?

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