The Economic and Social Council

Topic 1: Addressing food security and water scarcity caused by desertification in the Sahara Region

The Sahara Desert is the largest hot desert in the world, as it spans over 9 million kilometres in area. It spans over 11 countries including: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Sudan and Tunisia. A major issue which the Sahara region faces is the ongoing expansion of the desert land. This expansion is known as desertification, and it causes the desert to expand in several regions due to climate change and unsustainable human activities. This process causes significant challenges regarding food security and water scarcity. Firstly, in terms of food security, the expansion leads to the degradation of neighbouring soil and farmland, and so surrounding ecosystems are degraded, reducing biodiversity and agricultural productivity. The water scarcity is further intensified by reduced vegetation cover, which increases evaporation and decreases water infiltration, limiting replenishment of underground aquifers. These challenges highlight the urgent need for effective solutions to combat desertification and protect essential resources in the region.

An initiative started in June 2005 and adopted by the African Union in 2007 is the Great Green Wall Initiative. It was created to start combat desertification in the Sahara by creating a belt of vegetation 15 kilometres wide and 7,775 kilometres long starting from Djibouti to Dakar. However, over time the program began to focus on broader challenges. It developed into an initiative that supports water harvesting, environmental protection and sustainable land use in the Sahara. By 2020, about 18% of the targeted land was complete. However, more funding and assistance was needed to complete the project by 2030. This aligns with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, particularly Goal 15 (life on land) and Goal 13 (climate action). Overall, the initiative is still developing and working on solving the rising problem of the desertification in the Sahara region. However, there is still a long way left to go until the project is fully implemented and its long-term impact is achieved.

Topic 2: Reducing global dependence on imported natural gas to enhance energy security

Around the world, many countries are dependent on imports to meet their needs in terms of energy, transportation, and electricity. This dependence also causes economic and political challenges, as countries become vulnerable to price fluctuations and supply disruptions. Additionally, these countries spend millions to buy the gas, especially during global conflicts or crises, which also creates environmental issues, as they must burn thousands of tons of natural gas per year which contributes significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, which lead to serious health problems, such as respiratory diseases, and further reduce quality of life. Dependence of natural gases also weakens the country's economy, as a lot of money is put into importing gas which reduces governmental spending on public services such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure to suffer, and makes household items and needs more expensive.

Finally, industries which require energy like transportation and manufacturing may face fluctuating and increased prices because of the dependence of natural gas imports.

To address this issue, sustainable and renewable energy sources are used. These are much cheaper to harvest and increase energy dependency. These energy sources include solar, wind and hydro energy. Solar energy is using energy produced by the sun instead of using natural gas which is abundant and renewable and is harnessed using solar panels. For the wind energy, wind turbined convert wind energy into electricity. This allows countries which are rich in high wind speeds to harness their natural renewable resources and stop their dependence on imports. Finally, hydro energy is energy that comes from the movement of water, and so the movement is used and turned into electricity to be used. Each country or region can utilize the renewable energy source most available to them. While these methods are helpful, they also have a high initial cost. However, they have close to zero greenhouse gas emissions and so are extremely helpful to the environment. Moreover, they also allow the country to save money if they are used over the long term.

Topic 3: Regulating job loss caused by artificial intelligence in the workforce

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to develop, concerns about job displacement have increased. Artificial intelligence is a more cost effective and efficient alternative to human labour. The jobs most affected by Artificial intelligence are jobs in the manufacturing, data entry and customer service industry, as they are repetitive and don't require a high skill level. This has a major economic impact, as unemployment rates may rise and income inequality may increase. This may encourage companies to prioritize profits over job retention. In terms of social impact, people will struggle to find jobs, and there will be a higher pressure on educational systems. Therefore, the integration of Artificial intelligence will transform the workforce, as it will cause a higher reliance on systems and data-based systems, and will cause a shift from reliance on humans to a reliance on technology and statistics.

To solve this issue, government organizations and non-governmental organizations will have a large role. With AI rising, there will also be new jobs available relating to AI and as a result communities and educational systems should adapt to integrate AI instead of stopping it. So, coding, tech training and digital skills should be taught and learned to the newer generation. Moreover, training camps and ways to help educate the older generation should also be implemented so that people who do lose their jobs are easily able to adapt and find new jobs quickly. Government should implement regulations to protect workers and ensure that they can keep their jobs, or at least control jobs being lost due to AI. This ensures that people retain their jobs and that even if people lose their jobs, they are still able to maintain a constant and liveable income. So, to solve this issue a balance between humans and Artificial intelligence jobs must be found.