

GMUNC XII

**United Nations
Economic and
Social Council**

**Chanew Kim • Head Chair
Michelle Zhou • Co-Chair**



About Chairs

Chanew Kim · Head Chair

Chanew is a junior at Gunn High School. He began his MUN journey in 6th grade, during which he first joined the online JLS MUN club. Since then, he has been assisting with teaching Gunn MUN's JLS Outreach Program, and also co-taught last year's Gunn MUN Summer Camp. He has served as the co-chair of the UNDP General Assembly Committee in GMUNC XI. Outside of MUN, Chanew captains the Gunn Math Team, plays violin, and serves on multiple local climate boards and committees, including the City of Palo Alto's Youth Climate Advisory Board, Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition, and the Gunn Green Team.

Michelle Zhou · Co-Chair

Hello, my name is Michelle and I'm excited to be your co-chair for this double-del GA. I am a sophomore at Gunn High School and joined MUN freshman year. This will be my first time co-chairing and I hope this will be a memorable and educational committee. Outside of MUN, I enjoy figure skating, painting, and reading. I'm excited to meet everyone and see all the creative ideas you've prepared!

About Committee

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of six principal organs of the United Nations, responsible for coordinating the economic and social fields of the organization. It coordinates the work of major UN agencies like the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), UNESCO, and the World Bank, along with regional commissions and NGOs.

Important Dates

Oct 4, 2024 - Research award deadline
Oct 10, 2024 - Final position paper deadline
Oct 11, 2024 - Day of conference

Committee Email

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Foreword

Welcome to the Gunn Model United Nations Conference XII's ECOSOC. Having previously chaired at GMUNC, I am honored to be a part of this conference again and excited for another memorable year.

This committee explores the intersection of sustainable energy development and global economic equity, with a major focus on how nations can cooperate to transition from fossil fuels to clean energy, while no countries are left behind in a cycle of energy poverty. Delegates will be expected to finance, implement, and regulate policies for the global shift towards renewable energy. Since this is a GA, all writing will be done in the form of resolutions.

Position papers are due on October 4 to be considered for a research award, with the final deadline on October 10. If you do not submit a position paper by this date, you will not be eligible for any committee awards. Please send position papers and committee-specific inquiries to the committee email address: gmuncxii.ecosoc@gmail.com. Additionally, all delegates are required to complete contact and medical forms to participate in the conference. Please confirm with your delegation that the required documents have been submitted.

I wish you the best with writing your position papers and look forward to seeing everyone on October 11, 2025, for GMUNC XII.

Chanew Kim
Head Chair



Introduction

As greenhouse gases continue to blanket our Earth, trapping the sun's heat, global temperatures are rapidly rising, and our planet is changing for the worse.

Unpredictable weather patterns have displaced millions of people from their homes, ocean levels are rising, and the world is losing species at a record-breaking pace. At the core of the problem is human activity and our need for energy.

Energy is a fundamental part of human society and advancement. It supports nearly every aspect of modern life, from powering our homes and transportation to allowing economic growth, communication, healthcare, and more; however, our reliance on energy is putting a strain on our planet. Currently, fossil fuels are the main source of energy globally and the largest contributors to global warming. Fossil fuels currently account for over 75 percent of greenhouse gas emissions and 90 percent of carbon emissions. As such, the world has begun to go through an energy revolution, searching for alternative, clean energy sources like renewable energy. While renewable energy currently has limitations, an alternative to fossil fuels must be found if we are to preserve and save our planet.



Historical Context

Renewable energy is an energy source that can be continuously used while naturally replenishing over time. Its roots can be traced back to ancient civilizations, who depended on the power of the sun, wind, and water to support transportation, trade, and other parts of life. However, when the Industrial Revolution occurred in the 18th century, economies shifted away from renewable energy and towards fossil fuels due to their high energy density and availability.

Interest in renewable energy sources would only start growing again in the 20th century with the rise of research proving the detrimental effects of fossil fuels on the planet and environmentalism began to gain ground. Following the 1970s oil crises, which further showed how dangerous over-reliance on fossil fuels was, governments began to heavily invest into research and development of alternative energy sources. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit would mark a significant turning point, as it showed the increasing international focus on sustainable development. This summit would create Agenda 21, a comprehensive program of action outlining strategies for balancing environmental and economic development.

In the early 2000s, significant advancements in technologies harnessing solar energy and wind power made renewable energy substantially more efficient and cost-effective. The creation of organizations

such as the International Renewable Energy Agency and Sustainable Energy for All in this time marked the emergence of renewable energy as a competitive industry.

Furthermore, multiple international frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement in 2015, have been created that emphasize ending reliance on fossil fuels and transitioning towards renewable energy.



Past UN Action

In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission released the report *Our Common Future*, which introduced the modern concept of sustainable development. It defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,” linking environmental concerns directly to economic growth and social development. This framework laid the foundation for decades of UN action on climate and energy.

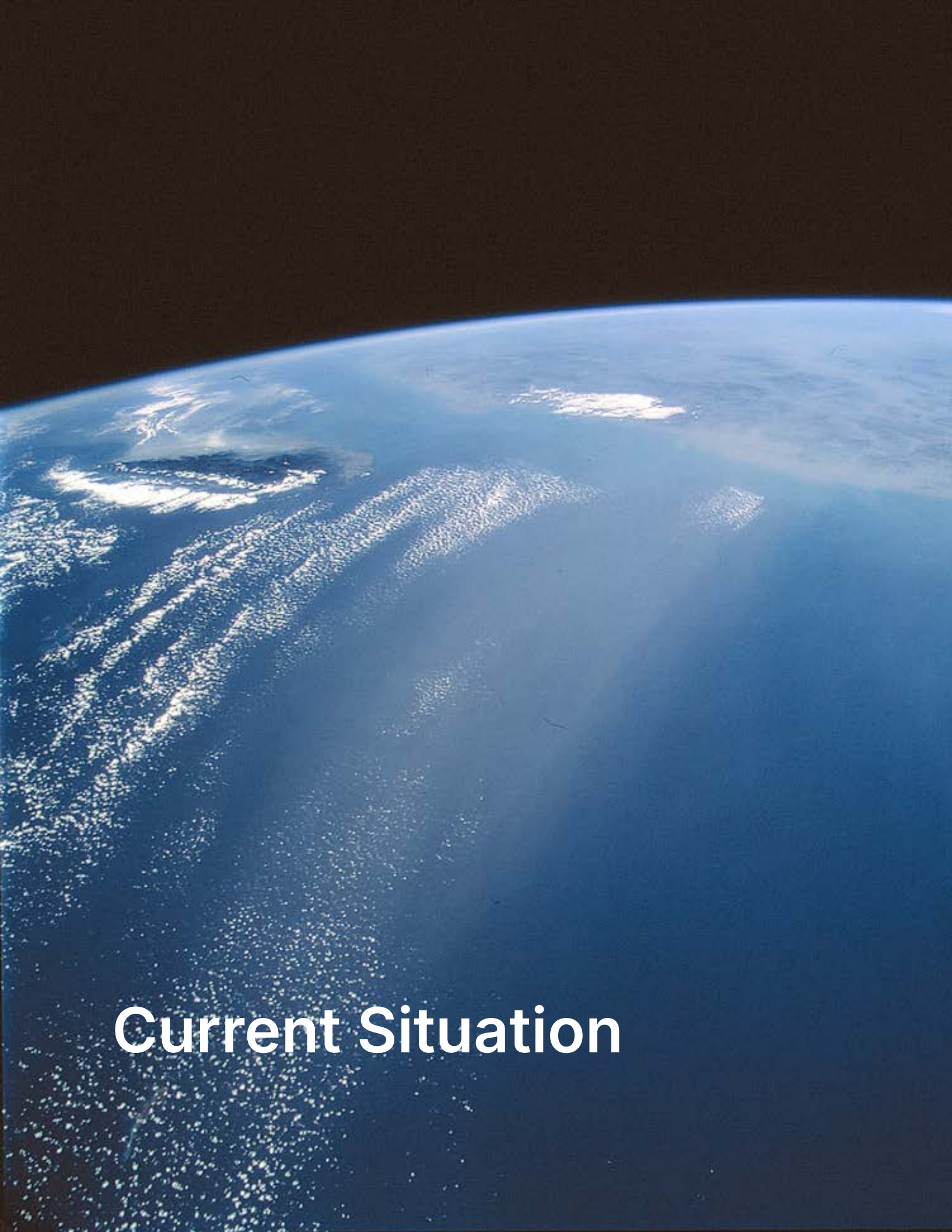
The 1992 Rio Earth Summit marked the first major global effort to put sustainable development into practice. World leaders adopted Agenda 21, a comprehensive plan of action for balancing economic growth and environmental protection, and signed the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The Kyoto Protocol, adopted in 1997 under the UNFCCC, became the first legally binding international agreement requiring developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, highlighting the growing importance of renewable energy and energy efficiency in addressing climate change.

In 2002, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development reaffirmed commitments made at Rio and emphasized the need to expand access to clean energy, especially in developing countries. A decade later, the 2012 Rio+20 Conference produced *The Future We Want* outcome document and

launched the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative, which set ambitious global targets for energy access, efficiency, and renewable energy expansion.

More recently, two landmark UN frameworks have guided global climate and energy policy. The 2015 Paris Agreement set a collective goal of limiting global warming to well below 2°C, with aspirations for 1.5°C, requiring a worldwide transition away from fossil fuels. That same year, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, with SDG 7 calling for affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all by 2030, alongside SDG 13 on climate action and related goals addressing land and ocean ecosystems.

ECOSOC has played a central role in coordinating these global efforts. By working with agencies such as the UNDP, UNEP, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), and international financial institutions, ECOSOC helps direct funding and technical assistance to countries pursuing sustainable energy transitions. However, challenges remain: international agreements often lack enforcement mechanisms, fossil fuel subsidies continue to outweigh renewable investments, and many developing nations still face resource and infrastructure gaps that limit progress.



Current Situation

Today, the global energy landscape is at a turning point. Renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower are growing faster than ever, accounting for over 30% of new electricity generation capacity worldwide. However, fossil fuels still make up around 80% of the world's total energy consumption, and many developing nations remain heavily dependent on coal, oil, and natural gas. The transition to clean energy is further complicated by economic disparities: while wealthier nations can invest in large-scale renewable infrastructure, many low-income countries struggle to secure financing, build grids, and ensure energy access for their populations.

The current political climate has made this transition more complex. Some nations, particularly those with economies dependent on fossil fuel exports, have been resistant to international agreements that threaten their revenue streams. Meanwhile, developed nations are under growing domestic pressure to meet their climate pledges under the Paris Agreement, while also addressing energy security concerns amplified by conflicts such as the Russo-Ukrainian war, which disrupted global oil and gas markets. Tensions also persist between the Global North and Global South, as developing countries argue that wealthier nations, historically the largest emitters, should bear a greater share of the financial and technological burden of the energy transition.

Internationally, rising geopolitical rivalries over supply chains for critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt, essential for batteries and renewable technologies, are shaping new alliances and trade policies. At the same time, extreme climate events, from heatwaves and floods to prolonged droughts, have highlighted the urgency of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. ECOSOC faces the challenge of balancing environmental sustainability with economic growth, ensuring that the energy transition is both equitable and inclusive, despite these political divides.

Goals for Committee

- Identify incentives for international cooperation while addressing the diverse needs of individual nations.
- Develop strategies to support entrepreneurship in nations with historically limited resources.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability and technological innovation into long-term economic planning.
- Encourage responsible private-sector investment in renewable energy infrastructure and green job creation.

Questions to Consider

- How can ECOSOC ensure that renewable energy sources are accessible to all member states?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of renewable energy compared to fossil fuels?
- How can ECOSOC incentivize member states and their populations to transition to renewable energy?

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