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ECOSOC 1: High-level Political Forum on
Sustainable Development (HLPF)

Research Report

Topic 2 : Promoting better educational standards for countries below the 2025 global average
literacy rate.

Mert ÖZER, Eve MAROTTE

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Introduction:

Over the years, as the world thrived and developed, literacy rates have increased radically, remaining as the most valuable way to communicate among people. Gathering information by reading newspapers and books requires a knowledge of literacy. However, there are still nations in the world where illiteracy is a major issue.

Moreover, a lot of nations still face the issue of illiteracy. According to the world population review, Chad has the lowest literacy rate. It is 27% which means that 73% of the population can't read and write.

According to the World Literacy Foundation, 750 million people are illiterate today. Illiteracy also impacts the world on a substantial level. An estimated 1.19 trillion dollars annually is the cost of what illiteracy and low levels of literacy caused in the global economy. Considering that more than two billion adults worldwide don't have the necessary literacy skills that employers need. Also, illiterate parents are expected to prioritize work over schooling their children which creates a cycle of illiteracy throughout the generations. It is also concerning that people who are illiterate will not have proper knowledge about practices required to keep the body in healthy condition.

As the ECOSOC 1: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the delegates representing global powers should promote better educational manners for countries that are below the global average literacy rate.

Definition of Key Terms:

Literacy: The ability to read and write. (Cambridge Dictionary)

Global Average Literacy Rate: The annually calculated literacy rate that includes all recognized countries. It's approximately between 86-88% currently.

Background Information:

Early History:

Literacy has always been a topic of discussion in human history starting directly from the early civilizations where only the elite knew how to read and write. In the time of classical civilizations like Rome, China and Islamic Nations. The literacy increased especially for the male population that resided in cities mainly, while farmers, slaves and women were left out and most of them were illiterate in Rome. In Imperial China, only people that access the government were literate. In Islamic Golden Age where Islamic nations prospered, people were encouraged to learn how to read and write in order to read the holy book Quran however, it still wasn't close to achieving universal literacy. In the Middle Ages, after the Roman empire fell due to how expensive the handwritten books were, only clergies and royal courts had access to reading and writing. Islamic regions continued to increase their literacy rates in the Middle Ages.

Creation of Printing Press:

With Johannes Gutenberg's machine, printing press, books became more accessible for the public and 1440, with the printing press, has been considered as a turning point and a literacy revolution for the world. Now more people were encouraged to read books and with the rise of the Protestant population, which believes that individual bible reading is important, literacy was promoted especially in Europe.

Industrial Revolution and The Problems It Created for Literacy:

The Industrial Revolution began in 1760 in Great Britain with the transition to machines in production lines. However, this revolution brought a huge problem with it regarding our agenda item. With rapid urbanization on a large scale, more illiterate workers were created and due to child labour, most children didn't have the opportunity to get the necessary education to know how to read and write. Now, education was unequal regarding the economic classes and genders. Though, nations decided to fix this issue by realizing the negative effects illiteracy has such as; reduced productivity and increased poverty. In order to combat illiteracy Prussia, Britain and France advocated primary education laws. Additionally public schools were expanded and more

teachers were deployed in these new public schools. In the end the literacy rates skyrocketed in North America and Europe.

Especially after World War 2, illiteracy was considered a big problem. Several nations like Türkiye, China and the USSR tried to combat this problem. International organizations like UNESCO, World Bank, UNICEF also promoted literacy programmes.

Modern Day:

The literacy rate today is between 86-88%. However, still 750 million people are considered illiterate today.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved:

UNESCO: Hosts programs and advocates for literacy projects.

Global Alliance for Literacy (GAL): A partnership-led project by UNESCO focusing on literacy projects including the youth and adults

Relevant UN Resolutions:

World Campaign for Universal Literacy 40 C/Resolution 16:
1. **Declares** that illiteracy is a world problem which concerns all mankind;

2. **Affirms** that literacy is an essential factor in economic, social and cultural development;

3. **Considers** that the time has come for all Member States to make vigorous and systematic efforts, as soon as possible, to eradicate illiteracy throughout the world;

4. **Invites** countries where illiteracy is a major problem to give due priority to literacy in their

development policy and programmes and, in accordance with this priority, to mobilize the material, financial and human resources available, whether governmental or non-governmental;

5. **Invites** the countries which have achieved the best results in the campaign against illiteracy in their territory to take adequate account, in their programmes of bilateral co-operation, of the priority that the countries receiving these programmes have decided to give to literacy in their development plans;

6. **Invites** those States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies which employ illiterate foreign workers to organize or develop literacy courses for them with a view to promoting the vocational training and social advancement of those workers residing in their territory;

7. **Invites** Governments to consider the possibility of increasing, at both the national and the international level, the resources allocated to literacy programmes by having recourse to various sources;

International Literacy Year Resolution:

1.   **Notes** with satisfaction the commendable work done by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and its Director-General to ensure adequate preparation for International Literacy Year;

2.   **Commends** those Governments which have established national committees or similar structures for International Literacy Year and which have launched national programmes aimed at meeting the objectives of the Year;

3.   **Expresses** its appreciation to the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system for their contribution to the preparation for International Literacy Year;

4.   **Notes** with satisfaction the active involvement of many non-governmental organizations in preparatory activities for International Literacy Year and, in particular, the establishment of the International Task Force on Literacy;

5.   **Welcomes** the convening of the World Conference on Education for All, to be held in

Thailand in March 1990 under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank;

6.   **Invites** Member States, specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to take appropriate measures with a view to achieving the objectives of International Literacy Year;

7.   **Also invites** Governments that have not yet done so to establish a programme of measures for enhancing literacy and functional literacy for the period up to the year 2000 along the lines of the Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000 of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

8.   **Appeals** to Governments, economic and financial organizations and institutions, both national and international, to lend financial and material support to local, national and regional initiatives to promote literacy;

9.   **Requests** the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to give wide publicity to the activities and measures to be undertaken during International Literacy Year;

10.   **Also requests** the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, through the Economic and Social Council, a report on the implementation of the programme for International Literacy Year;

11.   **Decides** to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session an item entitled "International Literacy Year".

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

UNESCO hosted literacy prizes which were given to programs or people that improved literacy worldwide.

Possible Solutions:

It's important for delegates to discuss the socioeconomic status of the countries which suffer from illiteracy while trying to find solutions. Also being inclusive and taking the thoughts of countries who are below the average literacy rate is significant. Throughout the debate it's encouraged for delegates to be informed about the current socioeconomic state of these countries and developing resolutions based on establishing globally funded education programmes. Employment programs as they are directly connected to this issue is also a topic that should be discussed upon.

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