The Next Five Years of the Millennium Development Goals: Developing an Action Plan

Background Information:

On September 8, 2000, world leaders and intergovernmental organizations meeting at the United Nations in New York City adopted the Millennium Declaration, calling for “a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).” While these goals have influenced many countries’ and intergovernmental organizations’ development strategies, progress on reaching these MDGs has been, at best, uneven. The recent global financial crisis has strained many countries’ budgets and led to spending cuts on development-related issues. Many scholars and policy experts feel that the international community will not meet the eight MDGs by 2015.

In hopes of reenergizing the global commitment, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon will host an MDG Review Summit on September 20-22, 2010. The meeting will develop a new action plan detailing how these goals could be achieved in the next five years.

The Simulation:

For the last decade, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) has worked with countries, non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental bodies to address the root causes of underdevelopment. As a reaction to Secretary General Moon’s call for a new Review Summit, the BMGF decided to grant the United Nations $10 billion over three years in its struggle to achieve the MDGs.

The UN Secretary General has asked the Economic and Social Council’s (ECOSOC) representatives to develop a strategy document that explains how these funds could be used to address the most serious challenges. Although $10 billion is a large amount of money, it will not be enough to secure the fulfillment of all the MDGs by 2015. Thus, the ECOSOC has the difficult task of crafting a strategy that makes the most of this grant by addressing some of the most critical goals. This means that the ECOSOC has to decide which goals are the most important, while explaining why its strategy must ignore the rest.

The ECOSOC will be divided into four groups; each of its members will represent different regions of the world and each group will draft its own strategy document. Once complete,
ECOSOC will meet to discuss each document’s strengths and weaknesses, and to draft a common strategy document.

**Information on the Assignments:**

This simulation exercise includes three assignments.

**Assignment 1** – This is an individual exercise. Each student will explain, based on their country’s views on the MDGs, what are the three most important MDGs. The paper, which will be 3 to 4 pages long, double-spaced, should clearly argue why these three MDGs are more critical than the rest. It should also explain ways the international community can best fulfill these three goals. This assignment represents 20% of final course grade.

**Assignment 2** – This is a group exercise. Group members will read each other individual papers and craft a strategy paper that mirrors their interests. The final document should be 3-4 pages long, double spaced and it should explain which MDGs are the most important and it should also provide a number of policies international actors should put in place to accomplish these three goals in the next three years. This assignment represents 15% of final course grade.

**Assignment 3** – ECOSOC will read all the group papers and then debate their weaknesses and strengths. These discussions will generate a single strategy paper that ECOSOC will present to the Secretary General and to MBGF. Active participation in these discussions is required. It will be part of the participation grade.

**ECOSOC’s Membership, Summer 2010**

**African Group** (Cameroon, Comoros, Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger)

**Asian Group** (Bangladesh, China, India, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Turkey)

**Eastern European Group** (Estonia, Poland, Moldova, Russia, Slovakia, Ukraine)

**Latin American and Caribbean Group** (Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Peru, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Uruguay, Venezuela).

**Western European and Others Group** (Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, United Kingdom, United States).