

# Economic and Social Council

## (ECOSOC)

### Topic B:



The question of ensuring access to primary resources and preventing their use to intimidate and as a weapon of war.

#### I. Introduction

Primary resources are crucial and essential for a country to function properly and since not all nations have access to the necessary primary resources to function properly (i.e. gas, oil, wheat, etc.) trade between countries is necessary. Trade between territories however can sometimes have negative consequences since it isn't always beneficial for both countries. Since primary resources are fundamental for the proper functioning of a country, they are very powerful tools for the states who naturally have them, and some countries decide to use these natural resources as weapons or to intimidate other nations.

When these primary resources are necessary for a nation to function properly become scarce, the country ceases to work in a correct manner and it can have devastating consequences, such as but not limited to, shortages of food and electricity.

These factors are highly inconvenient for the population of a country since they make day to day life highly impractical and in some cases impossible. For example food shortages on a large scale can lead to mass starvation, which in critical cases can lead to the deaths of thousands, if not, millions of people.

Shortages of primary resources can have powerful consequences, since it gives the upper hand to countries who hold capabilities on these materials, additionally, by simply stopping the supply of these resources to another country, it can potentially lead to a catastrophic economical and financial crisis, which directly affects their population. This shows how primary resources can be used to threaten and intimidate other countries since they can be used as weapons to damage another country.

## **II. Definition of key terms**

Primary resources: A primary resource refers to a raw material or to an unmanufactured good.

Shortage of primary resources: When the primary resources cease to arrive in the certain country and are not available anymore to the public.

Financial Crisis: A financial crisis refers to when the value of certain assets drops by a large percentage in a short period of time. They are often caused by banks panicking. (*Kenton*)

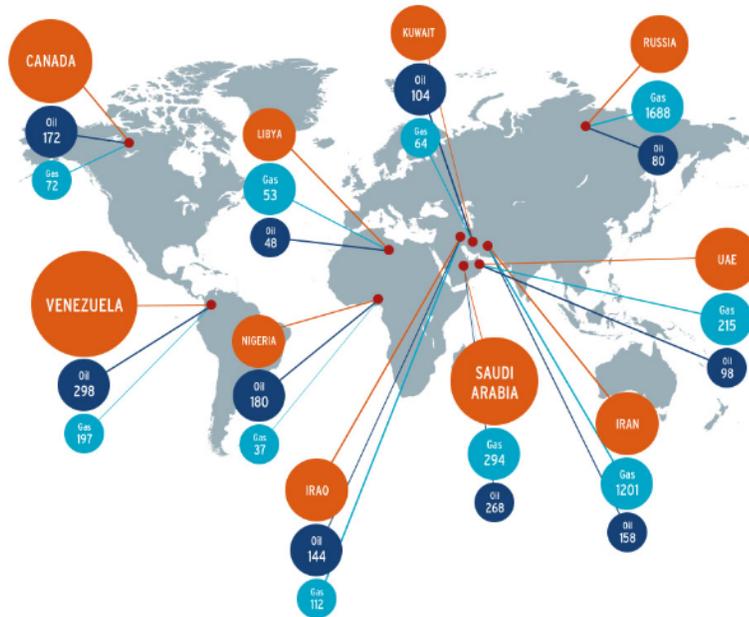
Demand & Supply: Demand and supply refers to the quantity of a good or service offered by the producers and the quantity of a good or service requested by the consumers. (*Editors*)

### **III. Major countries and groups involved in the issue**

The main countries who are involved in this issue are countries that have these primary resources. Nowadays the most important resource for a country, apart from food and water, is arguably gas, oil, coal or anything that can be used to produce electricity since it has now become essential in most people's day to day lives. This would make countries which have access to oil, gas and coal easily the main countries involved in this issue since they are the ones who have control over those resources. The main suppliers of materials which can be used for the production of electricity are China, Russia and especially when it comes to oil most countries located near Saudi Arabia. This would make those countries the ones involved the most in this issue since they are the ones who have the power to use primary resources as threats or as weapons against other countries. (See image below).

## OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY RESERVES BY NATION

Key: All oil numbers are in million barrels (MMbbl), gas numbers are in trillion cubic feet (Tcf)



Statistic source: <http://www.eia.gov/>

## IV. UN Treaties and Historical Events

There are some treaties by the UN which ensure that resources such as food are available to most countries. Therefore there have been treaties who protect foods which are a clear example of primary resources. An example of this is the treaty on plant genetic resources for food and agriculture which was signed on the third of November 2001. What this treaty does is protect these species of plants and to conserve them over long periods of time. This treaty also aims at easing the trade of crops and seeds between countries. (*Nnadozie*)

## **V. Main issues**

The main issue nowadays is regarding Russia cutting the supply of gas to Europe. Since Russia supplied around 45% of Europe's gas (*natural*), there were very bad consequences for many countries when Russia decided to cut their supply to Europe. The main effects were rising prices for gas and energy which have affected the whole of Europe where prices have nearly tripled in some cases. This has had very negative economic impacts on households since many people could not cope with the high prices for necessities since they were already in a bad economic state due to the pandemic. This has caused many people to not have access to heating which in some geographical areas is crucial because of cold temperatures and it has caused many people to not be able to afford basic things such as fuel for moving around which is essential for many people.

## **VI. Possible solutions**

One of the possible solutions would be for all countries to try and avoid dependency on other countries for primary resources, for example for the gas crisis which Europe is currently suffering, countries could invest in renewable energy which does not need the help of any other country to run and produce energy. A good option would be solar energy since they have very low maintenance costs and once they are installed they run with little to no maintenance. However the kind of renewable energy used would really

depend on the country it is being placed in and it would also depend on the geographical location of the country and the meteorological conditions of the country.

Another solution to help out people suffering from the gas crisis and the high prices would be to implement a progressive billing system where people who have low electricity bills pay less to help out households who have difficulties with paying bills.

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